

LIFE AND ADVENTURES

OF

ALEXANDER · DUMAS

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BY

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LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF ALEXANDER DUMAS.

CHAPTER I.

DRAMATIC PLAGIARISM.

THERE were two stages in Dumas's gigantic system of plagiarism. The first, when he was content to depend on his own industry, and could borrow and adapt for himself from dead authors, which was the case when he was writing his early plays. Finding this system too laborious, he passed to the ordinary French system of "collaboration," joining with two or three others in the composition of a piece. He then adopted the still easier plan of purchasing some striking or original plot or scenes, working them up with touches of his own : and finally established the great literary factory, "Dumas and Co," the discovery of which caused such a scandal, and to which he contributed little more than his name. About all these

proceedings there was a bold originality. It must be remembered that these devices were not intended, as in the case of smaller souls, to supply the want of genius or spirit, but to save time and labour; and he always contrived to infuse some portion of his own unique spirit into most of the works which were thus contracted for. It will be entertaining to follow in detail the workings of this extraordinary system.

No one possessed dramatic instinct in a more perfect degree. He had the true art of seeing dramatic situations, and their development in the most unlikely conditions, and this quite apart from any technical or professional view. Some dry, bald historical passages, which others might pass by, would set his busy and vivacious mind in motion, and would expand on the spot into the misty outlines of an entire drama. A single line in some poet would suggest a whole character. There can be no doubt that this is the true system, and that masters of dramatic literature have been always thus inspired. In everything he saw a sort of dramatic life: figures, thought, dialogue, all fell into a dramatic shape, as he looked and listened. But, unfortunately he was tempted beyond this legitimate course, and carried his faculty of "assimilation" to unwarrantable lengths. Where he wished for a powerful scene he would search

his memory or his note-book for something that was as powerful, but in keeping with the situation, and insert the whole with scarcely the alteration of a word. Did any friend produce an original character in a poem, story, or play that struck his fancy, he would introduce it into his next play, with scarcely any attempt at disguise. The ingenuity with which this was done was amazing, and the strangest phenomenon remained, that the whole was spirited and glowing, had a perfect air of originality, and did not in the least suggest the idea of patchwork. It was in this fashion that he wrote his piece of "Henri III.," which, it will be seen, must be almost unique, when we consider the principle on which it was constructed.

He enjoyed, as we have seen, the post of librarian, which gave him an opportunity of turning over, dipping into, and skimming all kinds of books; and there are "curious" readers who, with such opportunities, contrive to pick up a mass of superficial information. Once he came upon a passage in Anquetil where was described the Duke of Guise's jealousy of his wife. There was something piquant in the trick played on her by the Duke, who forced her to drink a potion which she believed to be poison, but which turned out to be a bowl of excellent soup; and this led Dumas to look for more information on the subject.

He presently discovered a passage in "Pierre de l'Estoire" recounting St. Megrin's assassination by order of the Duke; as well as a description of the death of Bussy D'Amboise, by the Seigneur de Monsoreau, to whose wife he was paying his addresses. The lady, giving him an opportunity, betrayed him to her husband, who had him assassinated by a band of desperadoes. There was little story to speak of here, but dramatic instinct, tolerably familiar with the incidents of the time, felt the significance of these disjointed events, supplied colour and background, and saw them falling into dramatic coherence. He had not found a story, but he felt that there was one to be found. The Duke and the lover might be of opposite parties—the wretched King, with his favourites, childish amusements, and courtiers—the Duke haughty, cold, and elderly, the lover gallant, young, and noble. Here were good elements. But a valuable ally in the shape of a recently published translation of the leading dramatists of Europe, Ladvocat's "Théâtre Etranger," which included Shakespeare, Schiller, and others, enabled him to apply his ingenious system with extraordinary success. Having a wife, a jealous husband, and romantic lover all "blocked out," he turned to his translations for effective details. There was the powerful "Don

Carlos," where the characters had pretty much the same relation to each other, and where, too, the lover was assassinated. A vast accession of interest could be obtained by copying the details from the German master. He accordingly makes the Duke *force* his wife to make an appointment with the lover, and while copying this, recalls a scene in Walter Scott, where Mary Queen of Scots' wrist is hurt by the ferocity of one of the lords, who wishes to force her to sign. This effective incident he adopts. In "Don Carlos" the lady's page brings the lover a letter, and the reception of it gives rise to an effective scene. By placing the great German's and the Frenchman's scene side by side, it will be found that the force of adoption could hardly be carried farther.

SCHILLER.

"Don Carlos."

Act 2. Scene 4.

Don Carlos. A letter for me! For whom is this key? and both sent with such mystery! Where was this given to you?

Page. As far as I could make out, the lady seemed to prefer that her name should be guessed, rather than told.

Carlos. A lady! What! How? Who are you, then?

Page. Page to her Majesty the Queen.

Carlos. (*Putting his hand on the*

DUMAS.

"Henri III."

Act 4. Scene 1.

St. Megrin. This letter and this key for me? You say yes. For the Count of St. Megrin? From whom had you it?

Arthur. Although you did not expect it, could you not make a guess at the person?

St. Megrin. The person! How? And who are you, then?

Arthur. Don't you recognise the arms of two Royal Houses?

St. Megrin. The Duchess! (*Put-*

other's mouth.) Be silent as the grave. I know sufficient now. (*He reads the letter.*) And she herself gave you this ?

Page. With her own hand.

Carlos. You must not trifle with me. I have never seen her handwriting. If this be a falsehood, confess it openly, and don't attempt to deceive me.

Page. Deceive you !

Carlos. (*Reads.*) "This key will open the room behind the Queen's pavilion." Then it is not a dream. It is not delirium. Yes. There is my right hand, there my sword, the written words of the letter. Yes, all is real. I am loved ! I am loved !

Page. Prince, this is hardly the place—you seem to forget.

Carlos. You are right, my friend. Thanks. I was not myself. What you have seen must be buried within you, as in the tomb. You are a child. Be so always, and show the same gaiety. How wise and prudent she was, who chose you as her messenger of love ! Not among such does the King choose his vile spies.

Page. And I, Prince, am proud to know that by this secret I am superior to the King himself.

Carlos. Boyish, foolish vanity. 'Tis what should make you tremble ! Should we meet in public approach me with timidity and submission. Let not your vanity ever seduce you into letting it be seen that the infante is well inclined towards you.

ting his hand on the other's mouth.) Silence ! I know all. (*He reads the letter.*) And she herself gave you this ?

Arthur. She herself.

St. Megrin. Boy, don't attempt to trifle with me. I do not know her writing. Confess, you have been trying to deceive me !

Arthur. I deceive you !

St. Megrin. (*Reads.*) "The rooms of the Duchess is on the second floor, and this key will open the door." 'Tis indeed for me ! Yes, for me ! 'Tis not a dream ! My brain is not wandering ! This key, this paper, these written lines, all is real. I am loved !—loved !

Arthur. Let me remind you, Count—silence.

St. Megrin. You are right. Silence. Be dumb as the grave itself. Forget what you have done and what you have seen ; never recall my name or that of my mistress. She has shown her prudence in entrusting you with this message. 'Tis not among children that one ought to fear spies.

Arthur. And I, Count, am proud to have a secret that belongs to no other.

St. Megrin. Yes ; but a terrible secret. One of the secrets that kill ! Should we meet in public, pass on without knowing, without perceiving me.

The only passage, says M. Granier de Cassagnac left out of Schiller's scene, was one in which, warning the page to be silent, Carlos says: "You carry a dangerous, terrible secret, like the poison which shivers the vessel in which it is carried." But this omission was in no spirit of self-denial; the passage being only held over to figure later in the "Tower of Nesle." It was natural, too, that his reference to "The Abbot" should make him think of the striking incident of using a human arm as a bolt—a device which he saw could be as effectively used by a wife to prevent the entrance of her husband.

These two scenes are virtually the same. Dumas had seen, as every reader will see, with what masterly dramatic effect the German poet had treated so simple a situation as the delivery of a letter by a page; and it will be noted how the tragic power is intensified by the element of a simple page becoming the owner of a terrible secret. This was what Dumas perceived, and he, as it were, marked, or "pigeon-holed" it as a useful topic for any situation where a lover receives a letter from a lady of high position.

It is amazing with what ingeniousness and versatility he continued to carry out this principle. Granier de Cassagnac, who had studied his character, profoundly exposed his *supercheries* with extraordi-

nary point and vigour. "The exciting of curiosity or surprise," says this critic, "was the basis he chose for a play, and with this view he selected a story that was rapid in movement and interesting. This he divided mechanically into compartments, as it were, and, to fill up each scene, rummaged foreign plays for any situations that seemed at all analogous; cut them up, hewed them down, and fitted them together in the oddest way." Thus the Duke of Guise's character is made up half of Fieschi's, half of Verrina's. The character of love experienced by St. Megrin is the same as in "Don Carlos," though the characters are wholly different. The general effect to the critic's eye is that of a patchwork; still, as stage work it is excellent, and he may be said "to know the boards" thoroughly—a science, however, that may be picked up in a certain number of lessons. He has, also, an amazing talent for modifying and altering. He turns a Turk into an Englishman, *a letter into a man*, and transposes in the most singular way, so that it requires a sort of expert to track him. "The effective incident of the handkerchief is to be found in "Fieschi," and Alexander, looking forward to vast operations in this direction, and therefore economical, had already noted the situation in the same play for future use.

In "Christine" the Queen falls into the water at Stockholm, which is to be found in "Fieschi." A whole monologue is taken "textually" from Act IV. of "Egmont." A scene in the same act, where Sentinelli is making a bargain with the soldiers for the assassination, is taken word for word from Wallenstein, where Butler makes a similar treaty with the soldiers. When Christina is abdicating she paraphrases a whole speech of Charles V. in Victor Hugo's "Ernani;" and as the French critic acutely points out, it should be observed that the Queen was abdicating while the King was ascending the throne. But a little shaping on the part of the ingenious worker made all right, and the speech now answers for a different situation.

A vigorous scene, where Christina, in speaking to Monaldeschi of a treason she suspected in others, gets him to convict himself, is taken from Lope de la Vega's "Love and Honour." Monaldeschi also recites a speech four pages in length, which is taken from Hugo's "Dernier jour d'un Condamné." This is pretty well for one play, and gives a good idea of the system. In the hands of a mere playwright the discrepancies and disjointed character of the result would be ludicrous; but Dumas writes with such a happy tact of selection, and covers over the joinings so

skilfully, that the result is a powerful collection of situations, each treated by the best masters in the world.

“One day,” he says, “I was strolling along the Boulevards when I stopped short all at once, and said to myself, ‘Suppose a man, surprised by the husband of his mistress, were to kill her, saying that she resisted him, and was thus to save her honour, &c.’” There was the idea of “Antony.” No mention is here made of Emile Souvestre, who it was stated openly had furnished the story. A more curious fact was connected with this play, for when, some time later, Victor Hugo brought out his “Marion Delorme,” it seemed as though the poet had stolen his Didier from his friend’s play. The characters were almost the same; both were illegitimate, both misanthropical, and both die on the scaffold for a woman. The lofty nature of Hugo did not condescend to clear itself; but, Dumas, in his own jaunty way, thus explained the matter. Long before, he had assisted with a number of friends at the reading of Hugo’s piece, and was delighted. De Vigny, he says, “had allowed his friends to repeat—it is always friends who do this sort of thing—that *Didier and Lavagna, the two leading characters, were copied from Cinq Mars and De Thou*. I am convinced that Hugo never bestowed

a thought on De Vigny's romance." The cool effrontery of this handsome vindication may be conceived, when the truth was, that Dumas, after hearing the piece read, and having it in his possession, appropriated this important character, and worked it into his own play. Hugo's poem being for a long time interdicted by the Censure, Dumas was able to produce his "Antony," and actually allowed it to be repeated that Hugo had stolen it from him. However, some twenty years later, he just glanced at the truth, but in his own characteristic way. "The reading 'Marion Delorme' had not merely produced an immense effect on my mind, but *it had done* me a great deal of good ; it had really opened for me brilliant unseen horizons ; it revealed to me methods in verse-making of which I was not aware, and it *furnished me with the first idea of 'Antony.'*"

Of all his compositions he seems to have been most pleased with "Richard Darlington." This piece, for some mysterious reason, he allowed to be presented under the names of two coadjutors only—viz., Beudin and Goubeaux—and yet it exhibits more than his customary share of plagiarism. Later it found its place in his works with his single name on the title. The truth is practically this, he had not yet arrived at a perfect belief in his theory, that mere "ideas "

were nothing, and that the writing of the dialogue and general arrangement of a piece constituted real authorship. When he had established his system of receiving "subscriptions" of ideas, or buying them, he wished to have the credit of his purchase. And certainly, in Maquet's instance, this is no unfair test, as it may be asked who is familiar with "*Beau d'Angennes*," or "*Les Deux Trahisons*," which this collaborateur wrote. The first portion of "*Darlington*" is taken from the "*Waverley Novels*," without even changing the names. For the middle portion he applies to his favourite "*Schiller*" (or rather to *Ladvocat's* "*Théâtre Etranger*"), and borrows from "*Fieschi*," where we find Richard himself in Lavagna, and Tompson in the Moor Hassan. For the powerful scene, in which Richard tries to force Jenny to agree to a divorce, he had again recourse to "*Don Carlos*."*

"*Térésa*" was written "in collaboration" with the clever Anicet Bourgois. The actor Bocage wished for an heroic old man's part, and applied to this writer, who brought his plan to Dumas. "I began," says the latter, "by putting aside the written scheme, and

* Long after these charges were made, Dumas took occasion to glance airily at them, and give a portion of a scene of Schiller's to show how he had found the "germ" of his own in it. But the quoted passage does not resemble the imitation, and it would seem that this was an attempt to divert readers from his more literal "conveyings."

begging of him to tell me the story. In his plan was to be found the main portion of the piece as it now stands. *But at once it flashed upon me, that I could never make anything of it but a mediocre piece, but that I could still do Bocage a service.*" This little sentence is a *précis* of Dumas's character, exhibiting delightfully the conceit and pettiness which was in his nature. The piece too clearly belonged to Bourgois for him to claim it as he did others, so it was a poor thing. Still he had a fair share in the poor thing ; but that was all from his noble wish to do a service to a friend !

Of Casimir de la Vigne—it was De la Vigne that first recognised the robbery from Hugo's "Marion Delorme"—he was jealous, and in his memoirs speaks of him with an unworthy depreciation. Yet from his "Ecole des Vieillards" he took the character of the elderly hero. In a scene where the latter discovers his wife's treachery, Dumas had recourse to his favourite store-house in Germany, borrowing first from "Fieschi" (Act I. scene 10), while the scene of the challenge is to be found in the "Brigands" (Act I. scene 2). Paolo is taken from Franz, in "Goetz of Berlichen." Another play, "La Mère et la Fille," is also named as having been laid under contribution. The gay little comedietta "Le Mari de la Veuve," is printed with his name only,

but Anicet Bourgois and Durrière had their share in it. But it is founded on an old piece of Hoffmann's, entitled, "*Le Folle Épreuve*," acted in 1787. Here, however, as in the delightful "*Mariage sous Louis XV.*," we come upon different ground, and the fine and airy distinctions of character, the psychological turns, and the spirited dialogue are so much Dumas's own, that the story becomes unimportant. The latter piece, in which his friends De Ribbing and Lhérie had a share, is one of those situations which are not invented, but are the common property of many nations. It turns on a young pair who are forced to marry, and who agree to oppose this project and to dislike each other heartily; but who find, in spite of all their exertions, that they are falling in love. The idea is an old one. The French reader will find it in a romance of Alphonse Brot, the English in "*Caroline of Lichfield*," while the modern play-goer has seen it reproduced in "*Uncle's Will*," so agreeably acted by Mr. and Mrs. Kendal at the Haymarket. Marivaux, too, has been drawn on for the "mirror scene," as well as for innumerable minor passages.

His share in the "*Tour de Nesle*" has been discussed elsewhere. His "*Don Juan*"—the music for which was supplied by Picini—is chiefly founded on "*Faust*," while the effective portion can be

traced to Merimée's "Ames en Purgatoire." In the graceful "Mdlle. de Belle Isle," he was said to have been assisted by Bourgois and Count Walewski. "L'Alchimiste" proves to be almost a translation of Milman's "Fazio;" "Paul le Corsaire" a free handling of Cooper's "Pilot." In fact, after his first two or three pieces, he always depended on the assistance of coadjutors, which, indeed, has always been a favourite practice in France, while even his own moderate contribution was supplied from the brains of others.

When the *exposé* came, and men like Granier de Cassagnac, Lomenie, and Quérard—to say nothing of the writer Jacquot, alias Eugène de Mirecourt—lashed him again and again for this wholesale and unblushing system of pillage, Dumas felt that some defence was expected from him, and he accordingly furnished a rambling explanation. It was genuine and truthful so far as it set forth his practice, but was amusingly sophistical as a specimen of serious argument. More amusing was the delusion that such could be accepted seriously by a rational public.

All human phenomena, he said, were public property. "Human genius creates, and individual genius applies. *The man of genius does not steal; he only conquers*,—he finds a province, and makes it a de-

pendency of his empire. Upon it he imposes his laws, peoples it with his own subjects, and no one—except, indeed, the envious, who are not his subjects, and cannot see their king in genius—dare tell him, ‘This piece of ground does not belong to your kingdom.’”

This declaration as to *conquering* caused inextinguishable merriment. It was never forgotten, or allowed “to drop;” for the notion, so seriously urged, of helping oneself to the finest thoughts in ancient and modern literature, and passing them off as your own under the title of “conquest,” was exquisitely droll. No one, we may be sure, was so indignant at such laughter as Alexander himself, for he believed in his own genius, and that by such “conquests” he was only paying a compliment. He was, besides, a Frenchman; and “in a country like France, which is the brain of Europe, and whose language is spoken all over the world, there should be no mere local literature, but a cosmopolitan literature. Everything that is grand, from *Æschylus* to *Alfieri*, from *Romeo* to *Sakontala*, from ‘*The Cid*’ to *Schiller’s* ‘*Brigands*,’ all belongs to France, if not by inheritance, at least by the right of conquest.”

On another occasion he developed this useful theory. “It is men, not man, who invent. Every one arrives

at his turn and at his hour, seizes what his ancestors have known, puts them into new shapes and combinations, and dies after adding a few grains to the heap of human knowledge. As to the idea of entirely creating anything, I altogether disbelieve it. When a stupid critic reproached Shakspeare with appropriating a whole scene from the work of a contemporary, the great writer replied, 'It is only a girl whom I have taken from bad company to place in good.' The same idea was in Molière's mind when he said, 'I take my property wherever I find it.' I am literally constrained to say these things, since so far from being obliged to me for making the public acquainted *with gems of scenic beauty they had never heard of, they were pointed at by the finger of scorn as mere thefts, and denounced as common plagiarisms (!).*" This, but for its perfect sincerity, might seem mere fooling; and is indeed unique for the exquisite mixture of self-sufficiency and naïveté. No wonder that a French critic exclaims: "At this point our arms fell down helplessly by our side; and the mere reading of such a passage seemed like the blow of a club."

In a certain sense, the phrase "conquest" is not inappropriate when applied to Shakspeare, Molière, and other great geniuses of the world, who have chosen

some familiar story to work on. They, in truth, only saw that the subject thus "conquered" was a part of human life and character, which their powers *made* a part of the great human story as much as any real event that ever happened. Into dry bones, lying exposed and scattered, they breathed living fire and poetry, clothed them with flesh, and imparted shape and colour. But Dumas's conquests, consisting often of literal translations, and of profuse borrowings of characters, scenes, verses, &c., could hardly claim to be placed on a level with such great works. In his own defence he traces the course of a particular incident as it passed through the hands of various writers. This powerful situation is that of a woman who, jealous and furious at the inconstancy of a lover, stirs up another to destroy him; and when the latter comes, red-handed, to bring her the news, grows furious and despairing at her orders being executed, and bids him never more see her face. Dumas finds this situation in De Musset's "*Les Marrons de Feu*," where the abbé says—

"Mais elle est partie, O Dieu !

J'ai tué mon ami, j'ai mérité le feu.

J'ai taché mon pourpoint, et l'on me congédie."

also in "*Goetz of the Iron Hand*," and in Racine's "*Andromaque*"—

“ O dieux ! quoi ! ne m’avez-vous pas
Vous-même, ici, tantôt, ordonné son trépas.”

and, as Hermione dismisses her agent,—

“ Ah, falloit-il en croire une amante insensée—”

where, indeed, the whole story is contained, “in posse” as it were, in the last line. We then go to the “Cid” of Corneille,—

“ Va, tu l’as pris en traître ! Un guerrier si vaillant
N’eut jamais succombé sous un tel assaillant.
N’espère rien de moi,” &c.

Though there is this curious similarity in the incident, yet there is such a mysterious charm in true genius, that as we read each in succession we seem to find virtually a new situation. Genuine character is always distinct and new, and in the hands of the great geniuses of the world, the same *relation* of characters to each other might be treated again and again with complete novelty. Thus De Musset’s dancer, La Camargo, with the abbé, and the special incidents of the period so close to our own, together with the author’s own nineteenth century and Parisian view of manners, imparts a distinct and completely novel tone. And this is also found in human life, where the same incidents are being reproduced with an endless novelty and variety. But such “conquests” are very different from the

meagre borrowings of hack dramatists, who have nothing but their situation to deal with. And certainly, after reading the treatment of this situation by these great writers and turning to Dumas's, the effect is that of a clumsy cardboard profile beside a fine piece of sculpture. His method is, indeed, not much above that of the intelligent workman who lays Minton's tiles in a hall. He goes on :

"These few scenes of 'Goetz' were stored up in my memory as though they were slumbering The living poetry of De Musset awakened them up, and from that moment I felt they must be used. About the same time I had been reading 'Quentin Durward,' and the figure of the Mograbin had struck my fancy. I had taken a few notes of his phrases. . . I determined to place my story in the middle ages, and make my two leading characters," &c. "I then began to turn over the chronicles of the fifteenth century to find a nail on which to hang my picture. I have always admired the singular graciousness of History in this respect. She never leaves *the poet* (!) in a difficulty. My system of dealing with history may seem strange. I begin by putting together a story ; I try to make it romantic and dramatic, and when the heart and the imagination has done its duty, I look up and down through history for a frame in

which to put it; and history has never failed to furnish me with one so nicely fitted to the subject, that it always seems as though the picture had been made for the frame, not the frame for the picture." Making pictures to suit frames! After his manner, he conscientiously sums up the hodman-like character of his work, and out of his own mouth is condemned. The specimens which he had just quoted owed their clear internal excellence to the writer's thinking only of the picture, the frame being supplied mechanically, as it were, by the atmosphere of the era in which they wrote.

Consulting the "Chronicle of King Charles VII., by Master Alain Chartier, *that most noble gentleman*," he found a quaint passage about a scuffle in a church between the courtiers and some scholars. "It will be seen," says Dumas, "that history had anticipated what was wanted, and had supplied a frame which for four hundred years had been waiting for its picture." The skeleton being thus found, there was now to be supplied the flesh and blood and muscles. "That was the business of history—history was keeping ready Charles, Agnes, Dunois, while the gallant and brilliant struggle of France was to be the background for the love of an Arab for the wife of a man whose slave he was." He then gives his own last scene, and ingeniously contrives "a triple imita-

tion," of De Musset, Corneille, and Racine, combining the variations of treatment in all three.

"The Alchemist," by Alexander Dumas, was a bold adaptation of Milman's "Fazio," or "Fashio," as the French made it. His old enemy, De Cassagnac, when commenting on the controversy as to the authorship of the "Tour de Nesle," gave him the severest thrust by saying that he inclined to Dumas's side. "It was evident," he said, "that he had worked on the piece, as we find a whole scene from Goethe, another from Lope de Vega, and a third from Schiller." It would take long to go through all the pieces of the great "arranger;" enough has been said to show what were his principles.

"A vast talent this," exclaimed Jacquot, "of being an arranger. Well there is some merit in such a gift; but let every man *arrange* his own wares. Here is the captain of a privateer who has boarded a merchantman. He is courteous, and does not cut the throats of those who give up their arms. He has even rum ordered up to restore them after the struggle. But all the while he is having the cargo brought on his vessel, and is stowing away in the hold all the merchandise and most precious goods. These he sees carefully put away in suitable places. Honest fellow! What a good *arranger* he is!"

De Villemessant describes how he turned a German story of Ilfland's, "Les Gardes Forestiers," into a tale called "Catherine Blum," and then made the original piece into a French drama. . . . One De Goritz brought him a German piece, the scene of which was laid during the minority of Louis XIV. The Censor interfered, and the maestro, with a happy carelessness, just changed the name and made it the "Youth of Louis XV."—historical colour being a trifle.

The fashion in which, *after* being exposed, he condescended to acknowledge his obligations is highly characteristic though scarcely loyal. In the "Widow's Husband" ("Le Mari de la Veuve"), he was assisted by one Durieu, and his old ally Anicet Bourgeois. He might have fairly given the aides-de-camp their share of credit, though no doubt the arrangement was in the shape of a fair bargain. They were very content to have the cash and the substantial aid of his powers. But when due acknowledgment had to be made, it was shabby to make it in the following fashion. He had a friend, he says, who when they met was always provided with some story, or plot for a piece in one, or two, or three acts. But nothing had ever been seriously agreed on. He sent for him (*Il accourut*, adds Dumas, loftily) and he told him "to run over the list of his subjects. I want a one act piece for

Dupont's benefit." The other asked was he mad, as the benefit was to be in a few days ! "That's my business," said the author, "*There is one day to write the piece*, another to have it copied, a third for the reading. There is plenty of margin, you see, for study and rehearsal." Durieu unfolded his stores, and the idea of the "Widow's Husband" was chosen. "Look here," said Dumas, "it is now mid-day, and I have business until five o'clock. *There's Anicet Bourgeois who wishes to get his entrée to the Théâtre Français*. Why, I'm sure I can't say ; I suppose it is some whim. Go and find him ; settle the arrangement of the scenes with him, then come and dine with me, and we will map out the whole together." The two arrived at six o'clock, and by midnight the partners had arranged the whole. Alexander engaged to have the play ready within twenty-four hours. Such is the slighting fashion in which this valuable aid of his two auxiliaries is disposed of.

Now, as he seems to claim the whole credit of this performance, it helps us to estimate the curious delusion that was always in his mind as to the meaning of his own originality. Here was a piece of which not merely the plot but the *scenario*—i. e., the very arrangement of the scenes, was found by two others, while he brought the dialogue. Anyone who reads the

play will see that it is not of such a trifling sort as that it could be "knocked off" in twenty-four hours. It is long, carefully, and deliberately written. It may be fairly suspected, from what he was to do in the "Tower of Nesle," that his friends brought him the scenes ready written, and that he set himself to rewrite and recast, with that light and airy touch which was peculiarly his own. It was highly improbable that a clever dramatist, such as Anicet Bourgeois was, would content himself with the barren function of merely carrying "a list of subjects" in his head, acting as jackal to his friend, without ever casting his ideas into some practical shape.

This unworthy system offered a strong contrast to the practice of a man who in dramatic composition was superior, and whose reputation in Europe stands far higher, viz., Scribe. The latter's pen was in demand for new operas and new pieces of every description—and the demand never flagged a moment till his death,—still the work sent out from that workshop was always of the first quality and the best that could be turned out. As we have seen, Scribe depended upon other men's ideas quite as much as did Dumas; but he used them after a different fashion. Scribe sought an "original idea" in every direction; for such, which were sent to him in hundreds,

written on a little scrap of paper, he would pay substantially. But these "ideas" became no more than suggestions which were to be elaborately treated and worked up after a fashion that would surprise the original inventor. Dumas purchased his idea ready for the market, dressed it up and labelled it with his name. A favourite argument put forward in their defence by Dumas and his friends was the parallel of the great painters, who employed their pupils to do the chief portion of the painting under the master's eye, directing and giving the finishing touches. This was really gravely urged, and indeed for a time accepted, for there was a certain speciousness in the illustration. Here was the great writer overwhelmed with "orders," to encounter which he worked surrounded with young scholars, whose exertions he inspired, whose movements he directed, mapping out chapters and their subject, sketching the line of dialogue to be followed, touching and retouching the whole when finished. This sort of workmanship might, indeed, appear for a moment to be akin to that of Raphael and Rubens; but a moment's reflection will show that the parallel does not hold. The painters' pupils worked merely at the mechanical grounding necessary to support and give effect to their final touches and surface, and which *disappears* behind the

latter ; the scholar's work is purely mechanical, has nothing to do with the thought and conception, and at the end gives place to the work of the master, which alone remains visible. But in letters there can be none of this hodman's labour ; every sentence that is written admits of no middleman, and to be effective must come direct from the author's brain. If there be any assistance from such journeymen, they must be both considered, in the proportion of their work, as *joint authors*.

But the only illustration that can be drawn from painting to apply to Dumas's case is that one of the great masters having a work executed entirely by one of his pupils, then signing it with his own name. This is what Dumas has so often done in his stories. And the allusion to Scribe's practice is most unfortunate ; for that dramatist was singularly scrupulous in allotting a due share of credit to all who assisted him. He always named his assistants. He thus actually shared his honors with them ; and when his own reputation was increasing, the reputation of those who lent him their aid was growing also. It was very different with Dumas, who assumed *all* the credit and left his coadjutors just what he found them, mere nameless hacks. This is highly creditable to the great dramatist whose reputation has suffered no

diminution by this honourable and unselfish sharing of credit as well as profit with those who had substantially helped him to win credit and profit.

Such was the serious indictment laid against Dumas, and such was the extraordinary system of manufacture which had already brought him name and fame, and enormous gains. Yet the great *exploiteur* was now, as it were, only in his infancy : his expansive soul had not yet reached to the idea of a vast co-operative workshop, whence his "works" could be turned out as by machinery. This further development we shall consider in its proper place.

CHAPTER II.

QUARRELS WITH THE THÉÂTRE FRANÇAIS.

1838—1844.

It would naturally be supposed that his feelings towards the Théâtre Français, the scene of his first dramatic triumph would have been of a kindly, or at least of a grateful character ; yet his relations with that great establishment, now maintained for some sixteen years, were marked by coldness and sometimes by open quarrel. It is certainly complimentary to his genius or talent that the first theatre in Europe should have been eager to retain his services : and what shows the tact and intelligence of the committee is the fact that his pieces still belong to the *répertoire* of the house. It may be said, indeed, that its affairs were in a desperate state, and the “shareholders” still clung to the idea that the so-called romantic drama could alone bring them in money. With a subvention of over twelve thousand a year, the interest of their funded four thousand pounds, and an average of large

receipts, they had not yet succeeded in retrieving their affairs. It was therefore natural that they should wish for some piece as successful as "Antony" to restore their house. But the great Dumas had acquired a new habit in dramatic matters, akin to the "retainer" given to a leading counsel, viz., what was called a bonus or *prime*. This was generally a sum of two hundred pounds paid to him before a line of the piece was written. A member of the Chamber of Deputies had attacked this system, which Thiers when he came to power saw was necessary, at least for writers who supplied the Théâtre Français. Dumas seems to say that his arguments convinced the minister, who entered eagerly into the whole question.* It was urged that as the French theatre played only certain nights in the week and never on the best night, Sunday, a piece which "ran" there for three months would bring its author but half the amount of percentage he would receive at another house where it was played every night during the same time. Again, there was the new fashion of presenting long romantic dramas which occupied the whole evening, whereas previously a light piece had preceded the important play. The author of each piece received a separate percentage, whereas the entire amount ought

now to be given to the man who furnished the whole entertainment of the night. Nothing is more admirable as regards the French stage than this systematic regard to the interest of the author, which is always looked to *officially*.

A selection of a few of these theatrical squabbles, marked as far as Dumas was concerned by shiftiness and even trickery, may be found entertaining in this place. With this view we may anticipate a little, and bring together incidents that occurred at a later period of his life.

Buloz, the *ci-devant* printer and proprietor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* was, in 1838, "King's Commissary" at the Français, while Vedel was the actual director. On one occasion his friend Anicet Bourgeois came to him with an idea. He was fresh from Franconi's, and had seen a wonderful horse, to whom "you could teach anything with a lump of sugar." He thought a good circus piece could be made on the subject of Caligula, who appointed his horse Incitatus consul. Alexander condescended to entertain this piece of "job work," and asked fifteen days "to study all that particular epoch;" but during the interval the horse was kicked by a stable companion and had to be shot. Dumas, who had studied "that particular epoch," was unwilling to have his labour

thrown away, and determined to write his play "and do without the horse." *

When it was known at the Français that Dumas had a piece ready, and an agent was sent to him to treat for it, he demanded his favourite bonus of £200, the engagement of "a lady in whom he took an interest," and the revival of his plays "Charles VII." and "Angela." These were handsome conditions, but they were agreed to. The lady in whom he took an interest was Mdlle. Ida Ferrier, who was later to be Madame Dumas, a person in whom he took no interest whatever.† The piece was produced, and was an utter failure. On the first night there was a tumult, and a line, "Thee I baptize in the name of the Holy Trinity," being greeted with a cry of "Ah, the Jesuit!" produced a storm of hissing. The chief of the clique had been duly taken into counsel, and, to use a cant phrase, as duly "squared." This ridiculous and childish institution, which it is amazing that any audi-

* Anicet Bourgeois was said to have written the whole. Dumas's fashion of refuting such statements which he knew were circulated was ingenious. "Would you wish that we should work on it together?" asked his friend. "Thanks, no; I mean to do it in verse." "O!—then say no more about it." "By no means: as you *furnished the idea*, it is only fair that you should share in the profits." "You can settle that as you like." We wrung each other's hand, all was settled, and we went to work.—See "*Souvenirs Dramatiques*."

† Dumas does not mention his angry contention with his old friend Buloz, who refused to sanction the *prime*, and which was conducted in the columns of the *Democratic Pacifique*.

ence claiming to have common sense or refinement could tolerate for an instant, had grown up during the last eight or nine years. When "Henri III." was coming out, he had his pit-tickets to give away to friends, or sell to Porcher the ticket-dealer. Now a band had grown up who literally preyed on the unhappy authors, actors, and actresses. The chief of these men received all the pit-tickets which were sold for their own profit at the doors, with douceurs of a hundred francs in addition from the author, and lesser sums from the performers who desired to have particular passages "supported." This tyranny has now grown into a monstrous abuse, and even the stranger becomes fretted by the unmeaning but regimental clapping that perpetually proceeds from a group in the centre. What is gained by this system it is hard to see, for almost every one present, save perhaps a few rustics, is aware of the "sham" character of the proceeding.* The play was a bad one. Our author, delighting to have an opportunity of touching pitch, did not fail to bring in Messalina, whom, however, the critics pronounced to be "weakly drawn." This was a cruel and ungrateful blow: Having fed his guests so long on high-

* For an amusing description of this organised body, see Berlioz, "*Soirées d'Orchestre*." The head of the claqué "takes airs;" attends the rehearsals, and shakes his head over passages: he is doubtful if this one will "go," but he will do his best, &c.

spiced messes, double adulteries, and what not, he finds them turning from the provend he now offers as insipid. But apart from the question of its merits, his quarrels with various members of the corps, and with the "King's Commissary," could not have helped the piece; and when we think of what histrionic spite can do when it finds an opportunity, it could only have been the complacent Dumas that would not have been apprehensive. A friend of his, the well-known Jadin, dragged out one of the most persistent hissers, who, when arrested, confessed that he was one of the regular claque. Furious at this duplicity Dumas called a meeting of the actors, the head of the claque was summoned, and owned that he had received instructions from the non-acting portion of the committee to do all he could to damn the piece! This piece of disloyalty seems almost incredible. Nearly three thousand pounds had been laid out in decorations and dresses, but nothing would make it go down; indeed, the subject was a leaden one. People would say to each other in joke when bored, "You Caligulate me, my dear boy," and after a few nights, during which the theatre was losing thirty pounds a night, the piece was withdrawn.

* "Souvenirs Dramatiques." Dumas records this angrily, and it may be accepted as true. By this time nearly every man's hand, or at least scoff, was against him. His bitterness towards the Théâtre Français is always remarkable.

Two years passed away, when a friend of his, Brunswick, formerly a jeweller, later an actor, brought what Dumas calls "an idea," but was, in fact, a complete vaudeville written out. This was a situation where a young girl leaves her room at night to see her father, who is in prison; and being bound not to betray him, becomes compromised. This, however, was all made farcical. Alexander declared there was "something in it," let it lie for years, promising his friend that he should have a third of the receipts. The friend disposed of his share for twelve pounds. It proved to be the charming "*Mademoiselle de Belle-isle*," one of the most graceful and interesting comedies ever written, and which has won the praise of a critic like St. Beuve. The success of Dumas in pieces like this and "*Une Mariage sous Louis XV*" prove what was his fashion of dealing with pieces thus brought to him. He dealt with the written matter as though it were a story that some one had told him; accepted it as a rough sketch, as something that quickened his wits: then added innumerable ideas of his own—a flowing and sparkling dialogue, and an entirely new re-arrangement of the incidents. The leading character was taken by the illustrious Mars, and a few years later by Rachel; indeed, no actress of whatever merit but would be

glad to appear in such a part. It seems hard to believe that a piece held in such esteem could have been the work of a mere "hack." This success was in 1839

Some time afterwards his friend Merimée met him, and, after praising this comedy, asked why he was not busy on another? Alexander said that he had not been asked for one. A few days later M. de Rémusat, the Minister, asked him to dine. There has been a good deal of laughter at these boasts of ministerial and royal condescension; but there can be no question but that his statements are accurate.* After dinner the Minister took him aside and formally ordered a comedy, promising to write him a letter to that effect. Dumas was on the eve of starting for Italy—set off—wrote his piece, which was the delightful and sparkling "*Mariage sous Louis XV.*," sent it over, and soon followed it. On his arrival he was informed with great glee by his enemies among the actors of the Français that it had been read and found unacceptable. He pulled the Minister's letter from his pocket, and contemptuously told them that they *must* receive his piece, as he had treated not with them, but with one

* It will be seen later how another Minister stated that confidential relations existed between Dumas and many Ministries.

superior. It was acted, and with great success, in 1841.

These proceedings show that the privileged theatre had its share of intrigue and weaknesses. A corrupt Minister, it will be seen, could thus impose any of his creatures on the theatre, and therefore on the public. The "Commissary of the King" had equal power; while the actors might exclude the pieces of a good writer to gratify some spite, provided it did not interfere with the wishes of one above them. But we now come to a play which led to a very amusing and characteristic quarrel. Dumas had written the "Demoiselles de St. Cyr," a piece rather forced in its incidents, but full of his usual spirit and gaiety. It turned upon the adventures of two girls at that school, who followed their lovers to Madrid, with a good deal of masquerading and intrigue that recalls the "Domino Noir." He had two assistants in this work, De Ribbing and De Lherie; but even with this aid he could not make the work original, for it is founded on a tale of Boccacio, which again was used in a piece produced not long before.

The pliant and accommodating Théâtre Français made a bargain with him of a singularly favourable kind, which is, at the same time, highly complimentary to his powers. An agreement was solemnly

signed and sealed that contained these terms: he was to furnish them with no less than three pieces, all *his own* (*de lui*—an awkward insertion)—two comedies, and a drama, each containing five acts. For the first, the “*Demoiselles de St. Cyr*,” which had been read, he was to receive a bonus of 200*l.*; the second was to be ready within four months; the third within seven. For the two last he was also to receive a bonus of the same amount, subject, however, to a condition, viz., that the receipts of the first twenty nights reached 2000*l.* These were handsome terms, for there were besides the author’s dues, which were from seven to ten per cent. on the receipts.

The first piece was duly performed on July 26th, 1843. To his own amazement and that of the town, there appeared, in the *Débats* of the following day, a sparkingly written critique of three columns, devoted to an attack on him, as well as on his play, and signed “J. J.” This was the work of Jules Janin, his “friend,” and is done with an entertaining originality and talent that contrasts strangely with the newspaper critiques of our day. He began by saying that everyone had been led to believe that they were now indeed going to see something wonderful, and prepared themselves for a laugh. The author was a

quick impetuous spirit of the most indefatigable fecundity and "verbose sterility;" one who pillages the most familiar situations, cribs his bon-mots from *ana*, and this so openly that the critic is embarrassed what to do. "You must be on your guard, for at the least distraction he makes a dupe of you. If you don't put your finger on the particular passage that has been stolen he makes a fool of you." After giving a detailed account of the plot, and ridiculing it in the gayest and most pleasant style,* he concludes with a fierce attack on his levity, his carelessness in "knocking up" pieces, which was highly disrespectful to an audience. In short, this indictment was in Janin's best manner, full of bitter wit and pleasant persiflage. But though Dumas richly deserved such a castigation, the dramatic spirit of everything that he touched was to bear him buoyantly along, and the play is now one of his stock pieces, and calls out the best talent of the stage.

Dumas was furious, and replied, in a letter to the *Presse*, with equal bitterness. He raked up the old

* Janin is very happy in dealing with the heroics of a situation where a husband finds that his wife has been pursued by a person who proves to be the King of Spain. The latter says he will leave the room (*sortons*!) to avoid the shame of striking a gentleman. The former breaks his sword in two, to avoid attacking his king. The French dramas are full of these ridiculously "noble" situations.

story of the "Tour de Nesle," which was so little creditable to himself, and reminded his enemy that in three months *he* had not been able to write a single act of that play. "You fasten your teeth in everyone," he wrote. "Not being able to do so to our great poet (Hugo)—being forbidden by your master—you have lain in wait for him behind some wretched rag of a paper to snap at him as he passed, hoping that if he did not die of the bite he would of the venom."* Janin returned to the charge, in a second paper in the *Débats*, which was even more personal than the first, and turned the laugh against Dumas. The quarrel could now only be settled by the mode usual among gentlemen of the pen in France. Our hero declared loudly that "he must kill Janin!" The seconds met, and their discussions went on for three weeks. It will be guessed that these turned on Alexander's favourite stumbling-block, the choice of weapons. He had still that invincible—so suspicious for a fighting man—objection to pistols, which, strange to say, as on other occasions, was founded on his own superior skill giving him too much of an advantage. Could he not hit a fly at forty paces? The story went round that Janin objected to swords, because

* *La Presse*, July 30, 1843. This controversial correspondence was later collected in a pamphlet, for the amusement of the malicious.

he was in possession of an infallible thrust. But at all events, as the challenged party, he was entitled to the choice of weapons. Loud laughter attended this droll discussion, and as there was no likely issue, it was suggested that the only course would be to make the matter up, which was done.* Dumas' demeanour to Janin afterwards was most amusing, being a mixture of awe and hostility, with, at the same time, an irresistible wish to turn him into ridicule, could he dare do so.†

This play, then, was the first instalment of what he had contracted to furnish to the Théâtre Français. The second piece was duly "delivered" (it seems as though we were dealing with "goods") by the date appointed. It was called "Une Conspiration sous le Régent." The shifty Alexander was now said to have exhibited *tracasseries* in reference to this part of his engagement. It will be remembered that his

* De Mirecourt, "Les Contemporains."

† In his "Causeries" he gives an odd picture of the uncertainty of the great critic—how he would attend the performance of a new piece, and be profoundly affected; saying, to his friends, that it was charming, affecting, &c. This favourable judgment is reported to the author, who is enchanted, and looks eagerly for the *Débuts*. But when the critic sat down to his desk, he became "like a driver whose horse has run away with him;" he must obey his pen, and write anything smart that occurs to him. The play was published with Dumas' letter at the end, but in the complete edition of his dramas I find it has been omitted.

bonus was to be contingent on the success of the piece, and considering that the "Demoiselles" had been nearly a failure, and that this was an inferior piece, he felt he could not reckon on receiving it. He "played" therefore for its rejection, and conceived the following ingenious plan. He spiced it with the most extravagant adulation of the Regent, to such an extent that the Censure interposed, and declared that this overdone praise would be a challenge to the disaffected. A slight alteration would have removed the objection, but Dumas made it a point of honour, protesting "against the violence that was attempted to his *dynastic* affections," which, as we have seen, were pliant enough. Nothing would do, he would make no concession. They must play his piece as it stood, or if they would not, he was willing to receive compensation to the amount of 240*l.* He worked this so pertinaciously, ventilating the sacrifice of his "dynastic affections," that a sum of 120*l.* was actually paid him by the Treasury. He thus retained his play, and enjoyed his bonus. He then ventured on another clever stroke. The play, as we have seen, was founded on a novel of his own, "Le Chevalier d'Harmental," and he was assisted in its arrangement by Brunswick. He now employed one of his men to turn the play into a romance "La Fille du Régent," which he disposed of

to a newspaper, which made the suspicious stipulation that he must not allow the play to be performed at the Français until after the conclusion of the story. But soon his coadjutor began to grow troublesome, and pressed the theatre to take up the piece, all the novelty of which had been destroyed by its appearance in the shape of *two* stories. The outraged committee was still anxious to come to terms, but Alexander became outrageous in his exactions. They must revive his "Christine," and give him a fresh bonus of 200*l.*; on these terms alone he would do violence to his dynastic affections.

But already these dynastic affections had been suddenly shaken, and this extraordinary being, who was alternately fawning on and abusing the royal family, who had wept conspicuously over the Duke of Orleans' coffin, and written an account of his weeping to the newspapers, might have expected to have laid the foundation anew for a lease of royal favour. Profuse adulation of the Regent might deserve recognition. Just then at this time died Casimir de la Vigne, and left vacant two places, one that of Royal Librarian at Fontainebleau, the other a coveted "arm-chair" at the Academy. It was necessary to be early in the field. Alexander actually asked for the place as he walked beside Montalivet, the intendant of the civil list, who

was then holding the pall!* The latter tried to show him the indecency of making the request at such a moment; but Alexander persisted, and declared it was for his son, not for himself, that he wanted it. He finally met with a blank refusal. His only friend at court was dead, and the King could not forget; though he might despise, the many insults he had received from this "Divin Blagueur."

The story soon got abroad, when Alexander addressed the following delicious *reclame* to the *Siècle*:

"MR. EDITOR,—Certain journals having announced that I had asked for and obtained the post of Librarian at Fontainebleau, I must beg you to contradict this statement, which is unfounded. If I ever coveted either of the chairs left vacant by the illustrious author of the 'Messenians,' and the 'School for Old Men,' it would be *only his chair at the Academy*."

This "only" is admirable. But the delicate hint was taken no notice of. And thus once more was his loyalty chilled.

He was at war now with the theatre, the King's Commissioner, and with the King himself; and in some ferocious letters addressed to the *Démocratie Pacifique*, he fell foul of all, not sparing the royal family,

* "Fabrique des Romans," where it is stated that the Minister, Montalivet, was ready to vouch the truth of the story.

who had shown so little appreciation of his dynastic affections. He protested that he had been unfairly treated. "In working for the Théâtre Français during a whole year and a half, and in making some three thousand pounds, I have not absolutely *lost*, but have *missed earning*, over five thousand pounds." This way of putting the matter caused great amusement.* In this way he would have performed his part of the contract—such effrontery seems incredible.† But a diverting history might be written of his squabbles with this theatre, which he pursued with an animosity that is almost childish, and which betrayed him into mistakes.‡

He one day discovered that a good actress of the theatre, Augustine Brohan, was the correspondent of the *Figaro*, and under the signature "Suzanne," was in the habit of attacking Victor Hugo, then in exile. Dumas

* He had already received from the "Budget of Letters," in the way of bonuses, over 1,000*l.* The theatre did not take much, therefore, by its unfortunate arrangement with him. It could, indeed, fall back upon the third piece which he had engaged to furnish to them. But it was known that he gave out that he would read to them a piece well known to be by one Dennery. They would find it inferior, he said, and would therefore refuse to accept it.

† *Journal des Artistes.*

‡ As when he declared before the Committee of the Council of State that the Conservatoire had not turned out a single good actor—thus indirectly reflecting on the Théâtre Français—Texier took the trouble of consulting the registers, and found that nearly every great artist of the Français, from Talma to Rachel, had been trained at the Conservatoire.

instantly sent a letter to the director of the Français demanding that the parts she sustained in two of his pieces should be withdrawn from her. This absurd step, however well intended, he must have known could be attended with no results. He says, however, that he received "fifty cards and twenty letters," among which was a grateful one from Guernsey, in which the poet declared Alexander to be "*one of the dazzling wonders of his age, as well as one of its consolations.*" The lady could defend herself, and attacked him in a smart letter. "M. Dumas," she said, "knew perfectly well that he had no control over the distribution of parts at the Théâtre Français. As for the lesson he attempted to give her, she declined to accept it. She may have been tempted into criticising the acts and writings of Hugo, at what was perhaps an unsuitable moment. But in such delicate matters no one has less title to speak than *the man who knew not how to respect the double exile of his old benefactors.*" He brought this thrust fairly upon himself.

In pursuing the dramatic career of Dumas, we are thus drawn into considering a portion of the history of the great French theatre, with which his early triumph was connected, a triumph which produced such a revolution in French taste. There was a

certain propriety in so serious a change taking place at the theatre, which stood at the head of all the French theatres, and which was to a great extent supported by the money of the State. Yet in recording these revolutions, and the agitation that attended them, we are encountered at every turn by evidence of some counter-influence, or serious interference, which arose directly from the control which this power of the purse naturally gave to the State. The question of privilege, whether in the shape of patent or of subsidy, thus becomes, for a people like the French, one of real political importance, and for ourselves one of more serious importance than would at first sight be supposed.

The principle of patents, that is of limiting the number of theatres, and of reserving to certain privileged houses the right of performing what is called the legitimate drama, is hardly worth considering, as it has been set aside both in France and England. But the principle of endowing theatres by the State, just as hospitals, and museums and such institutions are endowed, is admitted by nearly every European Government but our own. It may, indeed, be said, and with justice, that this is but a consequence of a universal system, there being a greater helplessness in foreign communities, who are accustomed to look

to their Governments for the supply of all public wants. But even allowing this distinction, it cannot be denied that in our own case there is a want of consistency and logic; for the principle is admitted and carried out extravagantly in other directions. If it be once granted that the drama falls within the definition of such indirect instructing and refining powers, as picture galleries and museums, and that a great play, greatly acted, would operate at least as favourably as a great picture at South Kensington or Trafalgar Square, the inconsistency must be admitted. The truth is, the power of the drama is not to be spoken of in the same breath with such mild "emollients of manners" as pictures, or old silver and china ware. On a cultivated mind a great play, greatly acted, will leave an impression that may last a life-time. On the average crowd, it must operate for better or worse; in France, unhappily, for worse.* Indeed, just as it would be impossible for any one to attend performances of a great play, such as would be seen at the Théâtre Français, and not come away without being more or less impressed, so it is plain that a course of pieces, of the character of English

* At the performance of the repulsive "Princess Georges," perhaps the most disagreeable incident of the whole, was to see the rows of young girls sitting with their mothers and fathers, and, with tearful eyes and clenched fingers, following the morbid sorrows of conjugal infidelity.

burlesque, is sure to vulgarise, if not corrupt, the mind. It would, in fact, readily be conceded that the collective influence of some thirty or forty theatres in a capital must act on the crowd to an extraordinary degree, especially on the lower masses of the population. To secure that good plays shall be presented and bad plays be excluded would be found highly desirable. In short, the *control* of the stage to this extent would be found an important aid in the government of a people ; for in proportion as the latter is refined and reformed the cost and trouble of repressing crime are lessened.

Here arises an objection, which has been often made, namely, as to the policy of subsidies, or the likelihood of their producing a desirable result. It is believed, in England at least, that the result of such State aid is usually enervating : and the instance is quoted of the Royal Academy of Music, which, aided by State grants, has neither produced music nor developed talent. It is as though one were to allow a poet an annuity on condition that he produced so many lines in the year. It must be said that, in spite of its subsidies, the state of the French theatre at this period of Dumas's career would seem to support this view. It received a subvention—since much increased—of about £8000 a year, while the

actors, who were all considered partners, shared the profit of the representations among themselves. Yet when Thiers came into power, after the Revolution, the establishment was almost on the verge of bankruptcy. They played to scanty audiences, and the expenses of a night often exceeded the receipts. During Talma's day the actors often received nearly a thousand a year as each one's share ; but at this disastrous period they were dividing about fifty pounds a piece, which was literally beggary.

In the year 1836, a very interesting debate took place in the Chamber on this question of subsidy, which was objected to on different grounds. The theatre had then tided³ over its difficulties, and was beginning to flourish. M. Thiers, as we have seen, was confronted with this difficulty, and, after his own characteristic fashion, at once grappled with it. It first occurred to him that the failure was owing to such pieces of academical dullness as "Marius at Minturnæ," "Pertinax," and the like, and he gave an order that a course of the old masterpieces of Racine and Corneille should be tried. As may be imagined, the result was only further failure ; so, having made this concession to legitimacy, he boldly cast about for a remedy, of no matter what description, so that it was efficacious. He consulted the books, and

compared the receipts. He found that putting forward the great masterpieces could only be done at the cost of a subvention of nearly £25,000, a sum the Chamber would never sanction. On the other hand, he saw that two plays, written on principles totally different, had brought in during a single year no less than £17,000; these were "Henri III." and "Hernani." The Thiers of forty years ago acted with the promptness of the Thiers of our day; he sent for Dumas, as we have seen, and charged him with the duty of writing pieces that were to restore the fortunes of the theatre. This was characteristic of the practical, though unscrupulous, system of the minister. His policy required that the theatre should be made "to pay," and he left the moral consequences quite out of sight. In the debate, then, it was argued with great force by one M. Fulchiron that, considering that State assistance was founded on the interest of the people, it was monstrous that the State should furnish money for the purpose of corrupting the people with monstrous and high-wrought exhibitions of crime and passion. Though pieces of the "Antony" class were filling the common theatres on the Boulevards, a sagacious mind might have seen that this was from a sense of curiosity, and that when the novelty was worn off the houses would thin

again.* But this state of decay could hardly be put forward as an argument against the system of subsidies. There were other causes, the chief of which was a system of court influence and jobbing, an excellent specimen of which was the reception of Dumas's first play, for which royal influence secured a hearing before hundreds which were entitled to be considered first. Again, no theatre could struggle against the dead weight of a series of academical pieces, the vanity of the actors presuming that such wearisome declamation set them off to advantage. Again, the loss of Talma left a blank which could not be filled, and deprived the theatre of genuine classic pieces which he had made famous. But the question of subsidies being injurious is disposed of by the flourishing condition of the Théâtre Français during the last ten years.

The true value of a subvention is not so much in the amount of the grant as in the substantial *recognition* by the State. This is a prize or stimulus to exertion, a security against those eccentricities and escapades which often break out in the independent professional. The subsidy, again, is more in the

* The reader will see that the President has always been consistent in his system, and ready to sacrifice the future to the present. The same hand that thus regulated the theatres was the hand that laid the enormous charge upon passports and the tax upon "raw materials."

nature of the assistance which a judicious friend will extend to a hardworking and conscientious tradesman, and should not be like the extravagant and reckless bounty which is lavished on the new Opera-house at Paris. Such gross and indiscriminate endowment can produce no profit, and is certain to lead to abuse.

In England, where pictures, music, museums, schools, religious institutions, are more or less administered and endowed by the State, it is certainly becoming, and logical, that the teaching of the stage should receive, not substantial endowment, but substantial recognition, and this could be done in a manner suited to the instincts and character of the nation. There is a sort of license now in the vast number of theatres springing up in all directions, in the extravagance of the entertainments, which will presently require regulation, if not repression. The best and most satisfactory fashion in which this could be attempted would be by indirect encouragement of the legitimate exercise of talent. The foundation and endowment of a national theatre, as has lately been suggested, would in this country have little beneficial effect ; on the contrary, it would probably end in the existence of a well-paid sinecure. It would be impracticable, as it would probably never

be accepted by the nation, even though confronted by its lavish endowment of South Kensington. The founding of a government theatre as an institution would of a certainty be a failure. With the principle of *laissez faire* that regulates official matters, everything but talent or merit would be considered ; and the judgment of board or official would not be likely to give satisfaction to the public. A time might come when it would be difficult to collect talent sufficient to present a legitimate piece respectably. No government endowment could create a corps of actors or a theatre, and therefore the meeting and association that so recently called on the State to take the matter in hand was only attempting what was visionary. But actors and a theatre may lead to this result. The scheme, if it took any shape, ought to aim at a gradual encouragement, or a helping of individual actors, or of the theatre itself, in a judicious way. A dozen pensions, to be distributed among those who have really devoted their talents to the advancement of the drama and of dramatic character, with an official recognition or title from the State, would have an excellent effect, and the reader could at once suggest the names to which this definition would apply. This step would at once lead to a more important one, for actors thus

honoured would naturally come together in the one company, with eager aspirants for the same honour ; and, fixing their home at a theatre like the " Hay-market,"—honourable for its traditions,—would soon insensibly organise a national theatre. But details in such a matter could readily be worked out ; the whole would not be so difficult as might be supposed, nor, as before was stated, so foreign to English traditions. The dramatic profession in England now comprises two distinct departments,—one the spectacular or pantomimic, which includes burlesques, sensation dramas, and the like. This needs no endowment, and can thrive on the ordinary commercial principles. Yet these the State makes no scruple of regulating in the interests of the people, making them less harmful than they need be ; but it takes no thought in the world of the smaller department of the genuine drama. Taking it simply as a matter of police, the whole relation of the State in England to the Stage is in a most disorganised and disorderly state, and requires a consistent settlement.

CHAPTER III.

"LA VIE DE BOHÈME."

It would seem, however, that Dumas's enforced tour had not toned down his excitable nature, for very soon after his return he was again engaged in all the ferment and political agitation of the time. Few people of the newer generation can have an idea of the excitement produced in Europe by the events connected with the history of the Duchess of Berry. Her bold landing in France, the eager pursuit, her narrow escapes and final capture, all made up a romance of the most thrilling kind. Professed Republican as he was, it is evident that Alexander had some leanings towards the cause of this spirited lady, or at least he was not *quite* fixed in his political opinions. At all events, in one absurd and ludicrous transaction that grew out of this episode, it was only to be expected that he should take an absurd and ludicrous part.

Early in February 1833, the papers were filled with mysterious reports of the illness of the Duchess, who was kept in strict confinement. These reports grew more and more substantial, until it became known that the Government had sent two leading physicians to examine into the case. On this news all the rage of political party broke out, while Legitimists and Republicans made the condition of the unfortunate lady their battle. An article in the *Corsaire* insinuating, or rather stating in plain terms, what was the cause of the Duchess's illness, brought about a kind of Donnybrook faction fight, which, for its fury, nowadays seems to us incomprehensible. A Legitimist paper, the *Revenant*, having fiercely refuted the calumny, its editor received a "collective challenge," directed to him and his friends and subordinates, to meet an equal number of opponents. The editor accepted for himself, but declined to engage his friends in the matter. At the same moment, Armand Carrel, the well-known fighting Republican editor, had written a fierce attack on the Duchess in the *National*, and immediately received a list of twelve Legitimists, one of whom he was required to meet. As, however, the report went about that the challengers required twelve opponents, Dumas flew to his friend Carrel, and literally found a crowd there of those who were eager to inscribe

themselves. There had been a coolness between them, Alexander says, as the paper attacked the Romantic School with fury, but he was admitted.* He offered his services to Carrel to make one of the twelve, saying that "he thought the cause ridiculous." Carrel explained that it was to be only a single encounter. He had selected one M. Roux-Laborie as his adversary. On the ground there was the usual Porte St. Martin courtesies, for which Frenchmen seem to have such a *penchant*. Thus the seconds of Roux-Laborie declared that their principal would prefer to fight anyone else rather than Carrel, since the latter, by his frank and loyal declaration at the Blois trials, had excited the gratitude of the party rather than their dislike. "If Carrel were wounded," said these seconds (according to Dumas) "mourning would exist in both camps, while, on the other hand, if it were his opponent, there would be mourning only in one." They were, therefore, not fairly matched. Carrel met this childish proceeding with a blunt declaration that he was there to fight, and that it was not his way to let anyone else fight for him. Carrel was desperately wounded in the

* He found Carrel "sitting with that charming woman, whose life, in the midst of all his struggles and commotions, was one scene of agony, which she hid behind a sweet smile, etc., etc." Dumas, to ensure dramatic effect, could never resist introducing one of those "charming women," etc.

encounter, and excited the sympathy of all Paris. A society that called itself "The Help Yourself and God will help you Club," immediately deputed a committee to wait on him and "inscribe itself" in the name of the entire club. This flattering mark of attention was followed up by the seconds of Carrel sending a challenge to Roux-Laborie's seconds, "with the most profound grief at having to make such a return for your noble behaviour this morning." But they knew the others were men of honour, and would understand. The reply came. "I have just been arrested by the police, so, for the present, I can only say that it is impossible for me to accept your invitation." To this the challengers wrote an answer, that they heartily regretted the interference, but would be delighted to meet any friends who would be inclined to take their places. This was like tasting blood, and the editors of the *Revenant*, who had declined the collective challenge a few days before, received a renewed provocation. "We send you," wrote Armand Marrast and Godefroi Cavaignac, "a *first list* of twelve persons. We do not require twelve duels all at once, but to follow each other, and at times and places we can readily arrange. There must be no excuses, no pretexts—such will not shield you from an act of cowardice and its certain consequences. This first

encounter between your side and ours, has now proclaimed war to the death. There is to be no truce until one or the other has succumbed!" A letter of the same kind was addressed to another journal, also proposing a batch of twelve duels. The name of Dumas does not appear in these lists, but he explains that "absorbed by the first performance of Hugo's 'Lucretia Borgia,'" he had only been for a moment at the office of the *National*. He met a friend, however, who was greatly excited, and who, finding the list filled up, sat down and wrote a letter to Nettement, editor of the *Quotidienne*, "to offer a meeting." He pressed Dumas, who was much disinclined to take any hostile step, to select some one else, "for Republican as I was, I had really *more friends among the Carlists than among the Republicans*. The *éclat* and the contagion of enthusiasm was too much for his vanity, and he sat down and wrote the following curious challenge:—

"MY DEAR BEAUCHÊNE,—If your side be as stupid as mine, and require you to fight, I would ask you to give me the preference. I am delighted to have the opportunity of offering you a proof of my esteem when I cannot offer one of friendship."

Again, we think of the "Tigre-singe," and the spectacle of these grown-up children frantically

quarrelling over their firearms, shows us the French character in the most curious way, and how ill-suited it is to a free constitution. In France a vanquished political party cannot accept defeat; and a pettish humour and mortified vanity—and even the refusing a hearing in the Chambers is significant—must be soothed by some violent proceeding. As for Dumas, his behaviour in “affairs of honour” furnished many a joke, and it looks as though he always felt secure as to the result. The almost burlesque character of the challenge, the fact that the police were already arresting or watching all intending combatants, and the absence in the country for *eight days* of the challenged, were certainly reassuring facts.

Carrel was now recovering, and the first act of his convalescence was to forbid his seconds to proceed farther. A solemn note was then addressed to the papers, signed by the four seconds, in which it was gravely stated that, as Carrel’s recovery had taken away all cause of quarrel, “any *collision* between the friends of the parties would be unjustifiable in the eyes of reason and honour.” Dumas’s friend returned from the country, and was at his disposition, but that eminent *farceur* dismissed the matter carelessly, saying that “after Carrel’s letter no more duels were to be thought of.” Such was the

termination of this ridiculous *tapage*—this three weeks' fierce "challenge of twelve," etc. The letter-writing was certainly of the fiercest and most melodramatic description, but the results were comparatively harmless. The finale was in keeping; for in a few weeks the royal lady, the insinuation as to whose illness had been so indignantly resented, was to justify the expressed suspicion of the Republican newspapers, and it was announced that her accouchement had actually taken place.*

* The story of Dumas's various duels would make an amusing chapter. Some years later he took offence at an article in the *Figaro*, and entered the office of the paper blustering and talking loud. "Who is the author of this infernal article? Quick, his name! I must know." Alhoy, the editor, was present, and said, gaily, that he did not know. The other grew more obstreperous: "I insist on knowing—I must kill some one." The other at last lost patience: "My good friend," he said, "you are going too far. I am responsible, and will take it on myself." The bellicose Dumas was a good deal taken back at this ready acceptance. If we are to accept the gossip of the time, it was secretly arranged that the duel should be of a harmless "make believe" kind, and no blood was to be shed. Nothing could exceed Alexander's ardour on the ground. "What! those blue swords!" he called to his negro; "Fetch me my black ones!" When their weapons were crossed he showed so much ferocity and rage, calling out "Defend yourself! Ah! a victory over *you* would not be worth talking about," that the other grew provoked, and gave him a little "prod" in the arm. Alexander, aghast, dropped his weapon and said, "What's *that* for?" It was not in the programme. There may not be much truth in this anecdote, but there was probably foundation for it, as it fits with what we know of his character. On another occasion his adversary's ball struck him, *ricocheted*, and buried itself in his leg so far that it seemed the shortest plan to cut it out on the other side. He was able to present himself to his mother limping, and pretending that he had sprained his foot!

About this time he again changed his abode to the Rue Bleu, No. 30, which were altogether handsomer quarters. For the next five or six years his life presented little that was interesting, the pieces that he produced being of indifferent quality, and having but moderate success. He seems to have lived a life of pleasure and excitement, and to have chosen his friends among the strangest characters and most "pronounced" Bohemians.

Only a few years ago this name was in much vogue. There used to be a good deal of interest on the part of our countrymen in the peculiar "fast life" of Paris. The French words, "Bohemian" and "Bohemianism," were introduced into the currency of newspapers, weekly essayists, and the like. Fast life is pretty much the same everywhere, and exhibits the same coarseness and vulgarity under every condition; but it seemed to be assumed that Paris fast life had a peculiar colour, and comparative romance, and hence was spoken of with indulgence and interest. "Bohemianism," as a title, is now beginning to drop out of use, and will soon be forgotten.

Still it may be said that pure literature is more of a profession in Paris than it is in England, and that a crowd of gentlemen, who with us are connected with the newspaper press in various ways, would be, in

Paris, *littérateurs*, i. e., clever men, who, though connected with newspapers, figure as dramatists, poets, and essayists. A good deal of this double function is owing to the shape in which books are published, the best as well as the worst works being issued in a small portable volume, and without the elaborate and costly system of advertising "Subscription of copies," and the like, which with us make the matter a much more serious business.* The newspapers, too, less solid, and lighter in shape and character—are more airy, and have a piquancy, and sometimes wit, not found on this side the Channel. For these reasons the writers are of a livelier and more vivacious kind, with a lighter touch. The gay character of the nation—the life spent in cafés and theatres, where youth, for a time, at least, is at the prow, and pleasure, even in old age, is at the helm—is accountable for this.

Dumas, surrounded by young men of this type, lived all his life after this fashion. It is surprising what a number of *spirituel* friends gathered round him even at starting. With actors and actresses he was always intimate, and by them always wel-

* It would be an interesting inquiry to investigate the working of national character in these two different systems. The Englishman hires, the Frenchman buys his books. It is customary to blame the great librarians for the monstrous development which the system has reached to; but it seems probable that the appetite for information and reading, in England, could not be stayed by purchased books.

comed. Of the two great artists, Dorval and Georges, he was the intimate friend. Of Mélingue, the original D'Artagnan, he wrote some amusing memoirs, which profess to be taken down from the lips of the actor. The most common form of meeting in that day was the supper; there was always supper after play and after *fête*, supper to arrange the "scenario," supper to meet an oddity or a wit. He used to bewail the change that came over the times when the peculiar charm of these entertainments had fled, or rather, what was the true reason, the vivacity, relish, and inspiration of youth had faded. The suppers were still going on, but a newer generation was sitting at the little marble tables.* But would we know how young journalists lived and earned their pittance; how they trafficked in their articles, sold their pens to tradesmen and actresses; how they shifted their opinions, and, working on the fears of others, obtained a few more francs, we have only to turn to the masterly pictures in Balzac's "*Illusions Perdues*." An entertainment given about the year 1831 or 1832 shows the rather reckless style in which the

* He edited an amusing *trifle* left by Roger de Beauvoir, entitled "*Les Soupçons de mon Temps*," containing sketches of Briffault, Saint Cricq, Bouffé, Romieu, and others. Most of these were eccentric beings, the point of whose jests chiefly lay in their perfect sangfroid. This sort of character always furnishes most amusement to friends.

young author of "Henry III." could squander his resources, and at the same time illustrates his mode of life.

During the carnival he determined to give a fancy ball to all his artistic friends,—players, painters, poets, editors, politicians. He had only a small suite of rooms, but his landlord, good-naturedly, gave him up another apartment, which happened to be unlet. He always affected a certain magnificence, and air of Eastern wealth ; and the rumours of this approaching entertainment began to excite great interest. He counted many friends among painters and artists,—Tony Joannot, Delacroix, Boulanger, whom he later took in his "suite" to Madrid ; Decamps ; and Granville, the wonderful caricaturist of animals. The rooms were unfurnished, and a pleasant scheme was proposed, that this artistic force should combine its talent for their decoration—the most effective kind of furniture. The idea was taken up with enthusiasm ; only it was agreed that the host should "nourish" his artists with three meals on the day, they going away to sleep. Three days before the ball an artist's colourman had stretched the canvas over the panels in proper style, and had laid colours and brushes all ready. The painters arrived and set to work. There was a scene from the "Tour de Nesle" (was

Gaillard (let one of the guests?), another from "Cinq Mars;" some were engaged on medallions representing Victor Hugo and Alfred de Vigny; while Granville, selecting a broad panel at the end of the room, proceeded to fill it with an admirable group, representing a full orchestra composed of all his favourite dogs and other pets playing away on different instruments with great effect. The notion of the orchestra of animals was truly French—gay and *spirituel*. Every one was at his task; the only absentee was Delacroix. Not until the morning of the festival itself did the painter arrive. He had not chosen a subject; but one was suggested, and he proceeded to "dash it in" after his own vigorous and poetic manner. Alexander, with some friends, had gone out to shoot a day or two before, and brought home plenty of game; and by seven o'clock Chevet arrived with a salmon of fifty pounds' weight, a chevreuil roasted entire, and served upon a huge silver dish, and a monster pasty. Three hundred bottles of Bordeaux were warming at the fire, while five hundred bottles (!) of Champagne were in ice. The guests arrived; over seven hundred were present, in every kind of dress. The host himself wore "a charming sixteenth-century dress;" his hair on his shoulders, and confined by a cirelet of gold; a pair of green tunic trowsers of red

and white ; and black velvet shoes of the time of François I. The actors and actresses of the Français were there in the dresses of his play, "Henri III.;" Dejazet ; the charming Falcon ; Rossini, disguised as Figaro ; Eugène Sue ; Alfred de Musset ; Roqueplan ; Frederick Le Maitre ; and, above all, the man who had probably assisted at the "descampativos" of Marie-Antoinette, La Fayette, was to be seen moving in the crowd, or playing cards. Tissot, the famous savant, chose the singular masquerade of a sick and dying man ; but this piece of bad taste was effectually chastised by the humour of Jadin, who, made up in crape and linen, followed him about persistently, saying, in dismal voice, "I wait for you." It was pronounced a complete success ; and at nine o'clock in the morning the sober passers-by in the street were amazed at seeing the guests rush out in a bacchanalian rout, the music at their head, and finish the nightly sport with a mad galop round the square.

Orgies of this kind—for such they were—as well as practical joking, were then *à la mode*. It was some such recklessness that could make him travestie his play of "Henri III." under the title of "King Pétaud," and so successfully that a pathetic scene where St. Mégrin gives his servant a lock of his hair for his mother, was parodied into a

song that every one was "humming." The burden went—

" Ah, Porter ! just spare
Us one lock of your hair."

One evening when a number of young men—Sue, Desforbes, Desmarcs, Rousseau, and the young author himself—were supping together, they sallied forth to carry out a practical joke, and selecting a well-known concierge at No. 8, Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, insisted on his giving them a lock of his hair for a lady who they said had been captivated by him. From that moment an organised persecution was carried out against him. Bands of young men succeeded each other in chanting—

" Porter, *do* spare
Us one lock of your hair !"

until the wretched man was worried out of all peace and comfort.

It was remarkable how the heroes of all these convivialities, almost without exception, ended their career in jails, madhouses, hospitals, or garrets, while Alexander himself was to die literally without a sou in his pocket.

CHAPTER IV.

A NEW PATRON.

1834—1842.

DUMAS had always a hearty love of adventure, and at this stage of his life it took the shape of a craze for travelling. He had flung himself with eagerness into the most passionate form of the drama ; travelling was now to have for him the same feverish kind of fascination, while the fervid attraction of romance-writing was to come later. This taste grew upon him, and for the rest of his life he spent almost as much time abroad as he did at home.

The year that followed his Swiss tour he spent in exploring the south of France ; and it was during the same year (1834) that he issued that famous prospectus, in which he proposed to “do” “the Mediterranean and its Shores,” in such high-flown terms that he seemed as though he were going to discover some new territory. It was for the printing of this prospectus, of which he had many thousands struck off at Marseilles, that he was sued in the courts ; the

defence he made being that he had given no authority for it, though he had corrected the proofs. It was said that his magnificent professions had quite imposed upon the minister of the day—M. de Rémusat—who gave him some official encouragement. Alexander started and explored the coasts of the Mediterranean, but, as may be imagined, came back without discovering anything new. He was always vast in his conceptions, and could invest all his proposals with an Eastern luxuriance. Failing his own adventures, he would “dress up” those of others, as he did the visit of his friend Taylor to Mount Sinai, and which he coolly published under his own name.

Now determining to spend some years in Italy, he started with his friend Jadin and Mylord, an English bull-dog, on a lengthened tour through the south of France and Italy. He says he received “a mission” for the latter country from M. de Rémusat, the minister. To this journey we owe those agreeable pictures of travel, “*Impressions de Voyage dans le Midi*,” the glimpses of the old Roman towns, Vienne, Orange, and others, which it is impossible to read without being filled with a longing to visit the scenes themselves. He passed from Rome to Naples. At Rome he had been refused a passport for Naples, but had, however, borrowed a friend’s passport

—at M. Guichard's — and had crossed the frontier. He had letters of introduction to all the principal personages, and, as a matter of course, his presence in Naples was soon known.

A Commissary of Police roused him up one morning, and carried him away to his office under arrest. He was submitted to an interrogatory—Why was he travelling under a false name?

"Because," said Dumas, "your Ambassador would not let me travel under my own."

"What is your name?"

"Alexander Dumas."

"Have you any title?"

"My grandfather received the title of *Marquis* from Louis XIV., and my father refused that of *Count* from Napoleon."

"Why don't you assume your title?"

"Because I can get on just as well without it."

The Commissary threatened to send him to prison, when Alexander exhibited some of his letters—one from the Minister of Public Instruction, who had entrusted him with a literary mission to inquire how education had progressed; another from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, recommending him to the French Ambassadors, and requiring them to give him, on every occasion—"Mark the words," said Dumas to

the Police Commissary, "on every occasion"—their protection. "As for this third letter, don't touch it, sir; allow me to exhibit it to you at a distance. It is signed MARIE-AMÉLIE; that is one of the noblest and most holy names to be found on this earth!" This judicious compliment was of course "intended for its address."

He and his friend returned to Rome, where he was presented to the Pope. He had brought no uniform; so he was in a serious embarrassment, for his dress suit was sadly worn. The difficulty was represented to His Holiness, who good-naturedly waved ceremony. This again was owing to the letter of the Queen, who, poor lady, was again outrageously complimented and brought before the public as "the most worthy, most noble, and holiest of women."*

He felt exceedingly nervous as he ascended the steps of the Vatican. His limbs tottered beneath him; he was obliged to stop. The account of the interview, which took place in November 1835, is a delicious specimen of Dumas's best manner. As he kissed the Pope's foot he exclaimed "Tibi et Petro!" an allusion that made the Pope smile. After talking of the "sainted Queen," the missions in India, and other topics, His

* "Unhappy mother!" adds Dumas, with his usual profanity, "on whose brow God has pressed the crown of thorns of His own Son."

Holiness came of course to the subject of the great Alexander himself. "Has it never occurred to you, my son, that in these days of ours the stage ought to be a pulpit, whence the word of God should flow? You seem to me to speak like a child who, though wandering away for a time, has not yet forgotten the universal mother the Church." Alexander answered this delicate reproach. "One would think that your Holiness read to the very bottom of my soul." He said he wished to act *as* a missionary, but he dare not. He would be sacrificed. The real authors of the corruption were Voltaire and Beaumarchais, who "really caused the Bible to be forgotten, and thought but little of the Gospel." This from the author of "Antony" and "Teresa"! But if he was encouraged by His Holiness he might attempt the task. "Have you chosen a subject?" asked the Pontiff, innocently. Alexander said he had long had it in his mind. What he had selected was "Caligula." The Pope suggested that the Early Christians might be introduced. Dumas hinted at dramatic difficulties being in the way, but he would see what could be done. (He made no allusion to his leading female character, Messalina.) It is quite possible that he really entertained His Holiness with speeches of this kind, for he was so far genuine that he lived in delu-

sions and distortions of every sort, his vanity and impulsiveness blinding his mental and corporal vision to the most extravagant degree. It was scarcely surprising that he did not perceive that he was "humbugging" others when he had so thoroughly humbugged himself.

Notwithstanding this cordial reception, he had scarcely set off on his return when he was arrested by the Papal police, questioned, and sent to the frontier under the escort of two Carabincers, who never quitted him. It would seem that all through his journey advices had gone before him, describing him as a dangerous "Red;" and, considering that he had been sent away from Paris only three years before, this was not wonderful. He wrote to complain to the Ambassador, and he says that handsome excuses were made by the Pope.

He then went to Florence, and there passed some time. In the same year he made a tour round Sicily in a small vessel with "Captain Arèna," and was caught in a violent storm. All their various adventures were duly written up, either by himself or under his direction, and it must be said that the "*Corricolo*," an account of Naples, and the "*Speronare*," an account of Florence—both written by his friend Fiorentino, under his direction—are as

spirited and amusing books of travels as can be found.*

It will have been noticed, from Dumas's persevering compliments to the Duke of Orleans and to his "sainted mother," that he was still looking with wistful eyes to the quiet slopes of court favour, on which one day he fondly hoped to recline. Nothing could, of course, induce him to sacrifice his sworn hostility to the King; but it would be unfair to extend this enmity to the children. After so lofty a renunciation and even defiance of his royal patron, it might be expected that having now "burnt his ships," he would abjure the Court for ever. But he had preserved an interest in the old direction, and it is amusing to find him cultivating yet another patron in the shape of a new Duke of Orleans, formerly Duke of Chartres. When this prince was a mere boy, Dumas had laid the foundations for this useful intimacy, and later, by unwearied industry, succeeded in turning him into a second patron. That valuable "esprit," which Alexander had begun to discover in himself, was now turned to profit, to the entertainment of the new friend, who, being easy and good-natured, was softened by these exertions. People expressed their

* In the former there is a surprising deal of wit and gaiety, without borrowings from the old memoirs or the *ana*.

surprise to the Duke at his thus allowing himself to be victimised in this fashion, and it was reported that he replied, with a shrug of his shoulders, "What would you have? He amuses me!"*

This relation must have been found very embarrassing by the Duke, who, after his client's enforced departure, must have been annoyed at receiving a bombastic letter of great length, dated from Reichenau, and which began: "I address, not the Prince Royal and heir to the throne of His Majesty King Louis-Philippe, but the Duke of Chartres, pupil of the Duke of Orleans, once teacher at Reichenau. I write to your Royal Highness in the very hall where your father once taught mathematics and geography,—rather from the very room. As it is only a few minutes to post hour, I send your Highness *the pages I have just torn out of my note-book.*" He then describes the place, and dwells, in almost sycophantic terms, on the honour it receives from such old associations, suggesting that this sacred spot should be fitted up and preserved with all care. "Turn your eyes back," he concludes, "to the past, then look at the present. Do you ever remember such rocking of thrones, *or meet on the high road so many discrowned travellers?* You see, therefore, how necessary it is to have an asylum

* De Mirecourt, "Fabrique de Romans."

ready, were it only *for kings' sons*, whose fathers cannot, *as yours did*,^{*} turn professor at Reichenau." We may fully acquit him of being conscious of any bad taste, not to say want of respect, in this extraordinary address. He fancied he was writing something becoming and heroic. Indeed there is something in his character, especially in this grave unconsciousness of the occasions where he is making himself ridiculous, that reminds us of Boswell.*

In all this whirl he was presently to experience a heavy shock in the loss of his good mother—the old friend and pious protectress of his childhood. This blow awakened him in the midst of his round of pleasures. It was the first of August, 1838, and people came running to tell him that she had been seized with a stroke of apoplexy at her humble rooms in the Faubourg du Roule. He hurried to her, and found her without consciousness. This was the second attack of the kind she had experienced; the first, it will be recollected, having seized her on the eve of the performance of his first

* The Duke had a talent for caricature, and drew one on stone of his father as Gulliver tied down by the Liliputians, which, however, was suppressed. The printer having sent it to the authorities for approbation, the King's head was erased and another substituted. "In 1834," says Dumas, "he presented me with two copies of this piece, one *before*, the other *after* the head, and I had the stupidity to let friends carry off both. Of course, so long as the Duke lived, I had only to ask him for fresh copies."

play. "Nevertheless, in answer to my cries, and tears, and, sobs, and, above all, to that instinct which clings to a mother to the last, God vouchsafed that she should open her eyes and know me. This was all that I ventured to ask for, but when that prayer was granted I required a miracle—that she should live. If passionate prayers were uttered over the face of a dying mother, they were then. . . . Every moment it was gaining on her. I wanted some one to open my heart to. I took a pen, sat down, and wrote to the Prince Royal!"

This odd proceeding, however, had its effect. His letter ran, "That beside the bed of a dying mother he prayed that God would preserve to the Duke his mother and father." In about an hour he found a servant in the royal livery, who said he came on the part of the Prince to know how Madame Dumas was. "Very bad—no hope," he cried. "Thank His Highness heartily from me." "I ought to tell you, sir," said the man, "that His Royal Highness is below." Dumas ran down, and found the kind Prince seated in his carriage. He had first driven to Dumas's own rooms, and had then come on here.

Of course, even at such a moment he must be extravagant. The door of the carriage was open; the Prince put out his hand, and our "grand Collégien"

laid down his head upon the Prince's knees, and wept there, in the open street, for a considerable time. He could not say how long. "All I know is that the night was calm, and I could see through the window of the other door the stars of heaven glittering."

Thus ended the weary course of Marie Labouret, the General's widow. Her son, with all his sobs and tears, had scarcely shown the more precious, because more practical, shape of affection. He had brought her in advanced life from her native place to a great city, where she was a stranger—on the ground of an economy which could only be secured by their keeping one establishment; instead he had chosen to keep two. Her closing years were probably neglected enough. This may be doing her son an injustice; but his own candid revelations, and his drawings on her little hoard whenever he could, must incline us to the conclusion. As for his emotion, the writing to the heir to the throne at such a moment makes us suspicious of its sincerity.

Being on such terms with this illustrious person, it occurred to him that he might utilise his friendship after his favourite commercial principles. The Duke was an enthusiastic soldier, who had distinguished himself in the field. Alexander proposed to write a "History of the French Army" by regiments. The

proposal was accepted, and the Prince agreed to give him the handsome sum of 320*l.* a volume. This being in the year 1838, Alexander had too many schemes on hand at the moment to find leisure for such a task, and handed it over to his secretary, Pascal, who eventually received eighty pounds a volume as his share.* Only three volumes were finished, containing the history of three regiments. It was a mere piece of "hack" work, full of blunders. Before, however, it was thus far completed, Dumas pressed for an additional sum of eighty pounds—on the ground, we may presume, of the laborious researches, etc., he was making—which was conceded by the Duke, who only deferred the payment till the completion of the work. The Duke's death stopped the project, though a volume came out a few months later; and Alexander, with all his sympathy for the "sainted widow," pressed her for what he called "the few halfpence" that were owing to him. The secretary of the household refused the demand, and then Dumas addressed this discreditable letter to the official:

"M. A. is impertinent. As for the eighty pounds, the Duchess can keep them. I am only too well accustomed to *publishers becoming bankrupt*." †. The

* Jacquot makes it only 12*l.*, but Quérard says that he is misinformed as to this point.

† Quoted by Quérard.

insolence of this speech can only be equalled by its ingratitude. For this was the noble lady whom he had so familiarly praised only a few months before.

Before, however, writing or "undertaking" this book, his client, the Duke observed, had become gloomy, and had lost all his wit. Pressed for a reason, Alexander confessed that he was "troubled in his mind." In fact, he wanted to be reconciled to the Court. The Prince promised to do his best, and often introduced his name, but the King only shrugged his shoulders when the name was mentioned. He could hardly have forgotten the impertinent letter that had been addressed to him by the "scourge for kings." The good-natured Duke then thought of a little *ruse*. One day, when the King was to pass through his galleries of Versailles, Alexander was posted in ambush, and as the King passed rushed out and prostrated himself before his sovereign.

Where now was his preface? "Let any one lash me with this preface, if I ever change from the principles of this letter!"

Half displeased, half amused, Louis-Philippe bent forward, pinched his ear, and raised him up, uttering these words, which every one heard—

"Grown-up schoolboy!"

He then passed on, leaving Dumas in ecstasies at

the reconciliation.* Three days later the Cross of the Legion was sent to him.†

This coveted honour was conferred during the fêtes at Versailles, in 1836. He could not even have the satisfaction of saying that the King had given it to him; for he owns ruefully that the Duke, on the occasion of his marriage, was allowed the disposal of four crosses. The grand cross was for Arago; the officers' crosses for Thierry and Victor Hugo, while a simple knight's cross was given to Alexander. At the same time, as if to mortify him, a knight's cross was conferred on an obscure person. "Thereupon," says he, "instead of hanging it at my button-hole, I put it in my pocket. This reminds me of the father of one of my literary friends, a cotton merchant of great wealth, who, having received the same honour from Charles X. for having lent him two millions, always carried the ribbon at the button of his breeches pocket."

The few years that followed were uneventful, and may be passed over, as he does not seem to have scored any fresh success. He was, however, in almost riotous spirits, which betrayed him into an act that

* "Fabrique de Romans."

† Yet in his "Causeries" he only makes the following declaration: "Je perdis immédiatement la protection de mon bienfaiteur couronné, et jamais je ne la reconquis, ni n'essayai de la reconquérir." See "Un fait personnel."

led to very inconvenient results. There was a young actress named Ida Ferrier, who had figured at the Batignolles Theatre, and had been promoted to the Porte St. Martin, where she had played with success in some of Dumas's own pieces. She had appeared in his "*Alchimiste*," into which she had put a "*sensibilité et une passion entraînante*" for which Théophile Gautier praises her. She had attracted the favour of the impressionable Alexander, who, carried away by his spirits and the consciousness of his intimacy with the Court, actually brought the lady to a ball given by the Duke of Orleans. But this infringement of etiquette and good manners was not to be passed over, and the story went that the Duke had said significantly to Dumas "that he expected him to present his *wife* to him." It was said that this royal hint had to be taken, and atonement made for the offence, else the penalty would have been disgrace and forfeiture of prospects at Court. But this malicious story is not supported by dates, the Duke having died before the marriage.

This was the lady for whose engagement he had stipulated at the Français. It was curious that the same piece, "*Bathilde*," should have been the occasion of her first appearance, and of the introduction to Dumas of its author, Auguste Maquet, perhaps the

most invaluable assistant author ever found. The piece had been sent by the manager to Dumas to *remanier*, and the great man was so pleased with the intelligence of its author that he at once took him into his confidence.

The marriage took place in 1842, and was celebrated with all the matrimonial pomp which so favourable an opportunity offered.* Chateaubriand acted as "best man." The happy pair lived in the Rue Bleu, and kept a most extravagant establishment, so extravagant that in a few years the lady had to quit Paris, and went to live at Florence. No one indeed was less suited to the rôle of a married man than Alexander. When the lady started for her new abode, her husband provided her with a letter of recommendation—one of his *débonnaire* epistles—addressed to the French ambassador—

"DEAR AMBASSADOR,—I send you Madame Dumas, who is as constant to you as is the eternal spring that you enjoy, and returns to claim the hospitality you so elegantly offered her. Be as good to her as you have

* Vapereau. He was not so ridiculous as Jules Janin, who had been married only the year before, and on the very evening of the ceremony wrote a *feuilleton* on the event! "See her there, all trembling, looking timidly round her. Her chaste and limpid gaze becomes bold, and seems to say, 'You see I was right!' What this little white hard, this lovely creature for me! &c."

always shown yourself to others, and some fine morning I shall set off myself to thank you and press your hand.

“ Yours,

“ With all the best wishes of my heart,

“ A. DUMAS.”

Without inquiring too curiously into the motives for this separation (he always owns that his chief weakness was the *beau sexe*), the fact remains that she never returned to Paris, and died abroad in 1859.

Before this break-up came, he had already spent some time at Florence, probably encouraged to go there by the proposal of one of those “missions” which it was later announced from the ministerial benches were often given to him. Of what description this was it would be impossible to say, as it could hardly have been of the kind he received when he set out for Algiers, viz., “to popularise the country,” Florence being already sufficiently *exploité*.

He took up his residence in the Villa Palmieri. “It was at the Villa Palmieri,” he says, with the indescribable complacency with which he places himself on a level with the great departed, “that Boccaccio wrote his ‘Decameron.’ I found that this name would bring me fortune, so I established my bureau in the

very room where four hundred and ninety-three years before the author of the *Cent Nouvelles* had his." Here he remained for what seems to have been a delightful year, being very intimate with Jerome Napoleon and his family ; who then bore the title of Prince de Montfort ; and whose two sons, Jerome and Napoleon, were glad to cultivate the acquaintance of the novelist.

One evening in July, 1842, Dumas was hurrying off to dine with these young men. When they came to meet him they wore gloomy faces. A rumour was abroad of a piece of news which they hesitated to break to him. "It concerned one," they said, "whom you love more than any one in the world : the Duke of Orleans is said to have been killed by falling out of his carriage !" "I became terribly pale. I felt myself totter, and caught hold of Prince Napoleon, covering up my eyes with my hands." He went then into a corner of the garden to weep at his leisure. "O my prince ! my poor prince !" I cried aloud ; then I added in a low tone, with *my heart's voice*, "*My dear prince.*"* Many loved him dearly no doubt, but few knew him as I had known him ; few loved him as I did. Why I say this I know not. The poet is

* To understand the exquisite absurdity of this article, it must be understood that it was addressed to a daily newspaper !

like a bell ; at every stroke it must give a sound. The Duke was dead ! The beatings of my heart kept repeating, dead ! dead !! dead !!! What was I doing the day of his death ? ” By a strange coincidence, on that day he was sailing with Prince Napoleon near Elba, when the French fleet, passing by, broke through the nets of some poor fishermen, thus ruining them. They had appealed to Alexander, who, on this day of the receipt of the fatal news, had finished a letter to the Queen, which began—

“ When I present myself at the gates of heaven, and am asked what claim I have to be admitted, I shall answer, that, not being able to do good myself, I sometimes pointed out the way to the Queen of France.” In his favourite semi-profane, semi-pious style, he explains how on this occasion he thought of her who was blessed amongst women, whose eldest son was called the Duke of Orleans, the second, etc., and concluding with an appeal for the fishermen. He found this letter on his desk. Should he send it ? Yes, he would. A good work of the kind would be a consolation. Only he directed it to the Duke of Aumale, “ to whom I had been presented on the race-course at Chantilly by the Duke himself—that Duke, who was not only the hope of France, but a Messiah for all the world (!). ” Not content with this long despatch, he

added another, suited to the present melancholy occasion ; only four lines. This ran :—

“Weep, weep, Madam ! All France weeps with you. As for me, I have suffered two great sorrows in my life : one when I lost my mother, the other when *you* lost your son.” He could not refrain from sending yet another despatch, to the widow of the Prince, enclosing a prayer to be said by her son. “My father who art in heaven, make me what you were on earth, and I ask nothing more from the bounty of God.” Never was this *farceur* greater than on this occasion, or when he was with such ineffable satisfaction giving his account of his interior consolations.

He waited a couple of days for the confirmation of the news, then read in a French paper that the obsequies were fixed for the 3rd of August. Of course, the famous Dumas, the man who loved his “poor prince” as no one did, must be seen at the ceremonies. It was now the 26th July. He secured his passport and started on the following morning.* He posted night and day. He reached Lyons on the 1st of August, and Paris by three o’clock on the morning of the funeral. He had a ticket for the Tribune, and with some college friends of the prince followed the corpse down to Dreux, where it was laid in the vault. He touched it on passing.

“One would have said that *it wished* to say one last good-bye to me.”

This hysterical account, published in the papers, was of course meant for the royal eye ; but it was hopeless to make him see that these arts were only exhibiting him in a more and more absurd light, and actually frustrating the aim he had in view.*

“This man,” he went on, “I loved with the love of both father and child. How he had inspired me with this feeling I know not. I can only say this, I would have laid down my life for him. He, too, was fond of me, and loved me a little. Else, how would he have granted me everything I asked ? God only knows how many a little alms I have distributed in his name ! Enemies have said that he paid me a pension of 50*l.* a year, and that on one occasion he made me a present of 12,000*l.* All that I ever received from him was a bronze group, on the night of performance of “*Caligula*,” and, on the day after his wedding, *a bundle of quill-pens.*” (!) (There is quite a sublimity in this insensibility to ridicule.) “It is true the bronze was the work of Barye, and that with the bundle of quill-pens I was to write, ‘Ma-

* The likeness to Boswell is extraordinary, who, in moments of similar excitement, would write letters to Mr. Pitt, and other great personages.

demoiselle de Belleisle.' " Alexander had on several occasions—we must fear, to make himself of importance—applied to him for the reprieve of prisoners, and had never been refused. On one occasion the Prince sent for the little Count de Paris. "Give your hand to Dumas," he said, "*papa's friend*, and *papa* has very few." "Your Royal Highness is mistaken," answered Alexander; "unlike other royal princes, you have friends, but no party." The other smiled at this, and asked his visitor what he would wish for the young Count. "To become king as late as possible," was the answer. "Right," said the Duke; "*it's* a miserable profession." "Not *that*, my lord; he cannot come to the throne until after your Royal Highness's death." "Oh, I can die now," he said, with a sweet smile: "with the mother that he has got, he will be brought up as I would bring him up; *she is* a prize that I have drawn in the lottery." "The fact is," adds Alexander, officiously, "it would be impossible for man to have more respect, more veneration, love, and confidence than the Duke had for the Duchess."

CHAPTER V.

MONTE CRISTO, AND THE FEUILLETON.

1844.

FEW story-tellers are so dear to story-readers, or have so unique charms of their own, as the author of those wonderful romances, "The Count of Monte Cristo" and "The Three Musketeers." The exciting and never-flagging turns of the tale—the dialogue, so brisk, and often witty, so dramatic that it might at once be transferred to the stage—the colour and chivalry, the gallantry of the brave gentlemen concerned, not too highly pitched, but human, and belonging to our own day—the originality of the whole—these qualities more than justify the extravagant popularity which has attended Alexander Dumas's two famous stories. It is when we turn to the romances of Mr. G. P. R. James, whose star was just setting as the other's was rising, that we see the amazing contrast. Both dealt with history, and made kings and knights of two and three centuries ago pass across their stages ;

but it now seems wonderful that the ponderous and matter-of-fact chronicles of the English writer should have found readers ; whereas no one can forget the delicious moment of excitement when they first made acquaintance with Dante, and the Abbé Faria, and the three brave friends of D'Artagnan.

According to Gautier, public interest in the progress of the story was amazing. "People found the characters so regularly and for so long every morning by their bedside, that they came at last to consider them as ordinary persons of daily life. Even the most busy could find a few moments, before going to business, for having half an hour's talk with D'Artagnan or Balsamo. . . . I have often heard the remark, "Monte Christo" has done so and so ; *I think he was right,*' or wrong, as the case might be, exactly as one would praise or blame the proceedings of a living person. We have even heard ingenious speculations and guesses, very much as servants speculate over a mysterious lodger." Such is true popularity.

He tells us himself, in one of his amusing fits of confidence,* how *he* came to think of this subject. He was staying at Florence in 1841, when old Jerome Bonaparte sent for him to the Villa de Quarto,

* In the "Causeries."

and suggested to him that he should travel a little with his son, the present Prince Napoleon. "I wish you to teach him France," said Jerome. There was to be no loss of dignity; each party should contribute fifty pounds, and it would be a pleasant little excursion. They went on board a vessel, and sailed along. They came to an island of which they asked the name. It was the island of Monte Christo. Alexander was struck with the name and with its appearance. "Let us sail round it," he said; and the reason he gave for this request was that he wished "to ascertain its geographical position," to note it, in fact, for a future story. This impulsive writer, it seems, drew a good deal of his inspiration from the places themselves. "To write 'Christine,'" he says, "I went to Fontainebleau; for 'Henri III.,' to Blois; for the 'Three Musketeers,' to Bologna and Bethune; for 'Isaac Laquedam,' to Rome, &c." Local colour, however, is not everything, though wonderfully suggestive. Hence the story of "Monte Christo."

The impression produced was of the most extraordinary kind. Both works were translated into the leading European languages. The "Three Musketeers" appeared in 1844, and "Monte Christo" a few months later in the same year. No two works could be more dissimilar in subject and character;

and though one dealt with days and characters nearly two hundred years old, he made it as fresh and as interesting as a modern tale. Hitherto his name had been familiar, but only as one of the rank and file of clever French novelists, than whom he was believed to be a more than usually eccentric specimen. Now the first of these stories had made him famous. There was that greediness to hear more from him which, we are told, attended the coming out of the *Waverley Novels*, or the successive numbers of *Paul Dombey's* story. The name of Alexander Dumas was known in every city. The whole nation read him. It was then that editors and French publishers came to him with prodigious offers, and it was then that he was tempted to apply that gigantic "co-operative system" to romances which he had already done so successfully in the case of his plays.

Though these two works had fairly introduced him to the readers of the world, he had already been pouring out a stream of stories which had made his name popular with his countrymen, and which have since been read abroad, chiefly on the credit of the successful romances which succeeded them. In this year of the "*Three Musketeers*" he had already written, or "directed," "*Ascanio*," "*Sylvandire*,"

"Amaury," "Cécile," "Gabrielle - Lambert," and "Fernande;" while in the years previous he had given "Aotè," "Comtesse de Salisbury," "Jean Davys," "Le Capitaine Pamphile," "Georges," and the "Chevalier d'Harmenthal." The two last were certainly the most remarkable, and the "Chevalier d'Harmenthal" showed the same exciting qualities as the "Three Musketeers." He had discovered in himself a quick instinct for a situation, the power of gaily touching off character, and a lively wit, all admirable gifts for a story-teller. His strange volumes of gossip, which he called "Impressions de Voyage," had quickened his observation, while the careless indifference with which he had set down his observations had lent a fluency to his pen, and even to his ideas. A habit of earnest but irresponsible writing, such as a keen and diligent diarist acquires, quickens the flow of ideas—even kindles invention, and may be likened to the practice acquired by a frequent extempore speaker. Successive failures, too, on the stage having forced him to turn his powers in another direction, he was favoured by an extraordinary system, almost peculiar to France, and without which we should probably have never enjoyed "Monte Christo" and its companions. It was then the heyday of

THE FEUILLETON.

We can hardly conceive the columns of an English journal being, as it were, railed off a few inches from the bottom, and the space being filled with chapters of a sensational story. Yet the portion of narrative given in the French journals is so meagre that it seems surprising how the stomach of the daily story reader can be stayed by such scraps. This mode of serving out a romance may be explained by the character of the people. With café life, and fondness for amusement of the kind, when a portion of the day is devoted to sitting in the shade, sipping absinthe, and playing dominoes on a marble table, the reading a portion of a story would be a positive intellectual advance. Another solution might be that the newspaper is intended for the women of the community as well as for the men. But a more satisfactory reason would seem to be that as the newspapers themselves are simply works of fiction, without professing to be so, there is nothing inharmonious in having a genuine piece of fiction in company. Any one familiar with such popular papers as the *Figaro* or *Gaulois* must admit that the Frenchman consults his newspaper, not to find the naked, but the agreeable, truth. Hence that wretched and childish, because so transparent, dressing-up for effect of the most indifferent *faits divers*; hence those insipid tricks and

devices, such as false announcements of deaths, untrue descriptions of "Murders and Executions in Sicily," which, with us, would be considered mere impertinences. A well-known lively French writer and critic, who himself knew these devices thoroughly, has given a pleasant *exposé* of his countrymen's weakness in respect of the *feuilleton*, and shows at the same time the organised shape of imposture into which it had sunk.

"For fifteen years," he says, "the French people have been the slaves of an association of writers of ill-digested and improbable stories. For fifteen years the public has read every morning at the same hour the same story, re-hashed, re-arranged, re-modified, and constructed with the same aids of composition, invention, emotions, and combinations. There is no variety but in the names of the hero. Yesterday he was called Arthur, to-day he is Octavius or Frederick. Last week his body was exposed at the Morgue, this week he has taken a wife,—two tragic ends, as the vaudeville says. The Parisian public is the most inconstant public in Europe, yet it never takes any interest except in the stories it knows already; it always applauds the same vaudevilles, always admires the same heroes, and always laughs at the same venerable jokes. There are nine combinations in the

composition of a feuilleton, neither one more nor one less. Could you discover a tenth, you would make a Napoleon or a Rothschild out of the feuilletonist. Since we have begun to neglect the productions of genius—the painting of the feelings, and the study of character; since we have deserted the mysterious sphere of the existence and operation of human passion, we have had the feuilletonist's combinations, and nothing but his combinations. The journeyman romancer has counted them—they are exactly nine in number; they are ticketed in his brain, and classed in compartments: the combination of adultery pinned to pure love; combination of crime tacked to virtue; combination of hate modified by passion, &c., &c., &c. The romance writer is a mere apothecary, keeping on hand drugs united in a certain proportion, preserving them in labelled boxes, and selling them to a long-eared and distrustless public. You, sir, want an involved, sombre, and Corsican-Brother narrative; here is the article; combination No. 4, mixed with combination No. 6, and tinged with combination No. 9, a mixture of these three is always successful with die-away listless women; I will forward to your address to-morrow my first dose—I mean feuilleton. Besides the grand combinations, there are the lesser, called *truc* (we will say *trick*), importing a knowledge of

the power of details. Thus we say of a writer, he spins his scenes with difficulty; Dumas has great power of trick; Méry has none. Algebraically we would say, 'A romance is a mere equation; we seek the \times of the heart, we disengage the unknown sentiment, we extract the square root of a passion.' Opening a romance of Lamartine's, we find a beautiful, but rather long-winded description of the valleys which descend, like so many beds of torrents, from Savoy towards France and Switzerland, and among these the broader and more verdant valley which opens towards Geneva and Annecy, between the Mountain of the Cat and the mural ramparts of Beauges; the Cat Mountain spreading like a tremendous wall towards the east, and the side of the valley decorated with pine forests, steeples of retired villages, towers of feudal castles now gone to ruin, &c., &c., &c. This description may be true and grand enough, but it is destitute of 'trick.' Mark how the practised feuilletonist would improve it: — It was on a fair evening of autumn (trick of an interesting opening); the leaves, touched with frost, were falling from the cherry and chesnut trees, &c., &c. The fog, descending from the mountain heights, formed apparent oceans and seas in the valleys, &c., &c., &c. Nature seemed dying of inanition, as did youth, beauty, love, &c., &c., &c.

(Trick of dramatic description)—Suddenly a human form was defined on the ridge of the Cat Mountain; he was following a wild path, narrow, stony, and precipitous; whence did he come, whither was he going? (Trick of preparation)—No one knew. (Trick of mystery)—He was clad (three columns on his dress, his appearance, his hair, his staff, and his portmanteau); but in contemplating this dark outline, so well thrown out by the background of white rock (trick of antithesis), the beholder would be struck with terror: was it a human being after all? *To be continued in our next* (trick of suspended interest). This is the substance of the first feuilleton, and with these six tricks the writer has secured his asinine public. The trick of the second will be to speak of everything but the dark form on the Cat Mountain. The reader will be anxious, for the length of twenty chapters, to know if the form was a man, a woman, or a fairy; so, finally, in the twenty-first chapter, he finds, to his great disgust, that it was only a Savoyard with his marmots, or a pedlar going to sell his wares at Chambéry.”*

Yet there can be no doubt but that to the peculiar shape of the feuilleton we owe the special fascination of stories like “Monte Christo” and the “Trois Mousquetaires.” With us a story that is told in monthly

portions is less influenced than it would be supposed, by that form of production. In many instances the whole is completed before publication, and where it is written month by month in fragments, it is rarely constructed with an eye to the artistic effect of such instalments. But from the daily production, entailed by the feuilleton, it became like the work of an improvisatore. The writer was almost in direct communication with his readers, and the influence of the daily audience was almost as powerful. Hence, too, in such a hurried and yet spirited fashion of composition, the evidence of co-operation would be less apparent, both partners would feel the same inspiring influence, and from habit would work with one accord.

But after all this became a sort of literary dram-drinking. As it has been with the plays so it has been with the feuilletons. Antony might now rave and commit all sorts of atrocities before the audience that had long ago "palpitated," uttered cries, or fainted, without exciting the least emotion. A story like that of "Monte Christo," told in a French paper, would hardly now increase its circulation by a single copy. This is the fatal result of sensationalism in all departments. *You can strike but once.* The second stroke is but repetition or imitation. M. de Villemessant recalled the passionate fervour with which these tales

were welcomed.* Now they seem comparatively "flat," not from our familiarity with them, but because the sense of curiosity and surprise have been gratified. It would seem as though every generation must have its passion or craze, which is special to itself and to no other.

"It was in these plague-stricken days," says Jules Janin, "that France was overwhelmed by some five or six huge compositions, which contained within their dark frames the whole earth and sky, and abyss, with all the most deadly passions of the human race. Think, for an instant, of these singular devices, in most instances of a lamentable sort, and in the most tired corner of your brain, you will suddenly find tales, romances, catastrophes, miseries without form or solution. It seemed like a challenge thrown out by public languor to the spirit, wit, and invention of the first story-tellers of the day. One, following out a course of stern realism, told us of poverty-stricken families and brigand peasants. Another, inspired by the devil, penned with feverish fingers the crimes and scandals of his hero. Eugène Sue passed from the splendours of 'Matilda' to the miseries of the 'Mysteries of Paris,' and the astounded crowd

* He even awoke his wife, he tells us, in the middle of the night, to tell her of the escape of Monte Christo in the sack.

applauded these pages, written without art, but full of an amazing invention, where was held up the miseries of this great city, where there is now no obedience and no faith. In these unwholesome studies people wasted their time; and the morrow, one work being done with, another followed, even more outrageous." *

The critic, however, remarks, with justice, that the vastness of these undertakings was a fatal obstacle to their enduring popularity. As soon as they had had their turn they were "carted" out of the way to give place to others, and were far too serious undertakings ever to bear revival.

In writing these *feuilletons* he had a surprising facility, and could write under all conditions, independent of interruption, noise, conditions of season or place. Interrupted a dozen times of a morning, he could resume his story without a second's delay. He could carry on half-a-dozen tales or plans at a time, and would rise from the one to confer with a collaborator. His most tedious interruptions came from persons wanting something—a box, for instance. He always granted this request at once, and thus got rid

* "Alexandre Dumas," p. 62. It is edifying to see how moral and reproving this great critic and his brethren have become *after* the event. They cannot be too severe on faults and manners which they themselves did the most to encourage.

of the intruder, who took a little note to the theatre. "My dear Verteuil, do oblige bearer with a box." As this was the twentieth, perhaps, he had written that morning no attention could be paid to it. It amounted to giving away every box in the house.*

His door was never free a moment. Strangers as well as friends were always flocking in—the former very often—to ask his opinion on their productions. He was always good-natured to young writers, and encouraged them heartily. But an obvious motive for such attention will presently suggest itself.

Sometimes his pen flagged a little; incidents would not suggest themselves. Still, the greedy evening paper was waiting. He was prepared, however, for this sterility, and was said to have been the inventor of the device of the short and "repeating" dialogue which had an air of spirit, and covered a vast deal of ground.

* Balzac, in his powerful story, "Illusions Perdues," seems to glance at the great *littérateur*: "Pour la littérature heureuse c'est la brillante courtisane insolente qui a des meubles, paye des contributions à l'Etat, reçoit les grands seigneurs, les traite et les maltraite, a sa livrée, sa voiture et qui peut faire attendre ses créanciers . . . moi qui vous parle, j'ai fait pendant six mois des articles où j'ai mis la fleur de mon esprit, pour un misérable qui les disait de lui; et qui sur ces échantillons a passé pour rédacteur d'un feuilleton, il ne m'a pris pour collaborateur, etc." The picture of "literary mercantalism," described by this great writer, shows that Dumas had only borrowed his system from journalism and social life.

- “ — Ah ! So it's you ?
— Yes, 'tis I !
— I expected you.
— Here I am !
— And you have succeeded ?
— I have.
— Quite certain ?
— Certain.
— What then ?
— The thing's done.
— Then, let us talk.
— With all my heart.”

It was curious, with column after column like this, how little the story advanced ; in fact, how little story-telling there was at all.* As he was paid by the line, and very handsomely too, a constant recurrence of this trick became very tempting. Later the directors of two leading papers, the *Siècle* and *Presse*, Dujarrier and Desnoyers, grew alarmed at the marginal meadow which was daily encroaching on the meagre rivulet of type, and came to an understanding on the matter. They sent him a letter to the effect that where the words did not amount to half a line he should be paid only half price.

De Villemessant happened to pay him a visit when this fatal decision reached him. Dumas took his pen and drew it across a whole page.

* In some of the Brussels reprints of his books these paragraphs are not observed, and the whole dialogue “runs on.” The effect is, as it were, like stripping an actor of his fine clothes. Such an arrangement, however, is a false one, as in dialogue the distinction of speeches should be marked by paragraphs. The real fault is with the writer.

"Well, there, I have killed him," he said—"Grimaud, the Silent. *I invented him specially for these little scraps of lines.* But as they won't pay me for them, now I must make all my characters *talk.*" *

Nothing could better show the charlatanry of the whole than that such elements as lines and half lines should be imported into the matter.

But it cannot be disputed that in his dialogue there was a remarkable spirit and life. This he secured by often acting the whole scene as he walked about the room trusting to the inspiration of the situation for happy replies and retorts. Much will be forgiven where there is life and spirit, and it must be said that he was rarely found unequal to a good situation. An

* Compare a curious passage from his speech at the famous trial. "‘Andrea del Sarto’ came out in the *Esprit Public*. M. Castelle had waited on me—a man of charming ways: he came to get something of mine, offering three francs a line. I said, ‘the man who empowered you to make me such an offer either has no money or is a fool.’ You must know my fashion of dialogue on the stage makes me put a deal of dialogue into my stories—a vast crowd of lines for ‘Yes’ and ‘No.’ ‘Really,’ I said to M. Castelle, ‘you are not going to pay three francs for each yes and no. It is nonsense.’ He replied, ‘We are going to offer M. de Balzac 12,000 francs for one of his works.’ ‘M. de Balzac,’ I replied, ‘is a man of prodigious talent. You will have no reason to repent your bargain if he gives you something like ‘Le Père Goriot’ or ‘Eugénie Grandet.’ It was thus that the *Esprit Public* came to publish ‘Andrea del Sarto,’ which is merely a fragment out of a large work, called the ‘Florence Gallery,’ and which is published in that city. You must know, gentlemen, that I publish my books not only here but abroad. (*Laughter.*) I have got here a specimen number of the ‘Florence Gallery.’ It is a magnificent work.’” (*He exhibits it in court.*)

episode in one of his stories, where the triumph of the court favourite in securing her presentation to Louis XIV. is described, is almost unrivalled for spirit, *finesse*, situation, and interest. Passages like these are what make his books his own, and constitute the real charm with his readers, even though the "padding" may have been done by other eminent hands.

It had been remarked, that in a single year, 1844, he had issued nearly forty octavo volumes, and it was believed that no man of his idle habits and tastes could have found time to write so much. Some curious stories had been whispered about, and the strange system of compilation which he had adopted in his plays might not improbably have been applied to his novels. His growing success, too, and his hot temper, had made him many enemies, who were quick-eyed and quick-cared. His own honest carelessness left him open to all the whispers of the malicious. A "gallery of living writers" had just been issued by a clever young Frenchman, named De Loménie, who had attacked his "system" with extraordinary spirit, wit, and bitterness. "He constructs," he says, "whole *masses* of novels and feuilletons by the hundred. In a single year, 1840, he issued no less than two-and-twenty volumes octavo. With one hand he writes the history which he

rummages out with the other, and God only knows what sort of a historian M. Dumas makes. He has published some 'travelling impressions,' where we find everything—drama, elegy, eclogue, idyl, politics, cookery, history, geography, wit,—in short everything but truth. No writer *humbugs* his readers more thoroughly, and no reader was ever so indulgent to his boastings. When he is not upon the road, which is but seldom, he usually lives at Florence. From that city he either *forwards* or *orders* innumerable bales of literary produce, which he does not always succeed in disposing of to advantage, as the Dumas article is rather going down in the market. In fact, by this deplorable contagious literary trade M. Dumas seems bound, body and soul, to the worship of the golden calf. On the bills of the very commonest theatres, in every sort of literary grocery we see his name figuring. *It is simply physically impossible that he could write or dictate all that bears his signature.*"

This was plain speaking; but the author could not have spoken so plainly unless he represented what had been talked about as plainly. It was now said that he kept a sort of literary workshop, employing a number of clever young hands, who worked under his inspiration and direction, and whose labours he

touched up. This band was said to consist of Paul Meurice, Hippolyte Augier, Couaillhac, Mallefille, a clever young Italian named Fiorentino, Vacquerie, Gerard de Nerval, and, chief of all, AUGUSTE MAQUET.

The partnership system is almost unknown in England ; the only remarkable instance being that of Beaumont and Fletcher. Perhaps the most successful combination of the kind on record is to be found at this moment in France, where MM. Erckmann-Chatrian have furnished one of the truest as well as the most fascinating forms of historical narrative. It is quite conceivable that with two minds filled with a kindred enthusiasm, and not working for speculative ends, bound together by an affectionate intercourse, and having but one unselfish end in view—the perfection of their task—it is conceivable that the story should have almost as complete a unity as though it had been the work of a single person. With two quick and inspired souls the language and writing would become merely mechanical, and in the case of a *feuilleton* like “Monte Christo,” the two authors would almost live their life in the story as it appeared day by day. This, it will be seen, is very different from the mere commercial partnership adopted in plays where two clever craftsmen take alternate scenes and

fit the whole together in carpenter fashion.* In this view might be recommended the dashing co-partnership of Dumas and Maquet.

For an enterprising writer like Dumas, this system was the most desirable that could possibly be conceived. Turning his study into a busy workshop, or rather acting like some of those thrifty wholesale dealers and manufacturers who make fortunes by using up every scrap, this daily vending of his wares was exactly what he wanted. The necessities of this periodical appearance became a certain spur to his exertions which might be wanting in the case of long romances, not to appear until the last page was finished. In addition to the principles which he had so successfully carried out in his plays, he could now avail himself of a whole sheaf of new ones, offered by the peculiar conditions of the feuilleton, and with very little exertion could keep three or four serials running.

This was an extraordinary notion, if true. That it was true there could be no doubt. But when he was enjoying the tremendous success of his two

* "Voilà comment s'établit, dans notre temps, une collaboration pour le théâtre : tout auteur qui apporte le sujet d'une pièce est de droit collaborateur si la pièce est représentée : les idées s'inscrivent en *doit et avoir* (i. e. debit and credit side). La littérature dramatique tient des *comptes courants*."—Véron, "Mémoires d'un Bourgeois."

great stories, worse passions than that of laughter and petty malice were evoked: and the real blow was to come from an obscure young man whom he had offended. One Eugène Jacquot, who came from Mirecourt, had written him some letters, which the great author neglected to notice.* This young man, who had some literary talent, was indignant at finding the newspaper columns blocked by the work of Dumas and his foremen. Being behind the scenes he knew that this was the labour of Maquet and others, disguised under the eternal signature—"A. Dumas." Hence came a perfect vendetta, and, in the full flush of Dumas's triumphs, in the month of December, 1844, Jacquot submitted to the Society of Men of Letters a curiously worded resolution, which was meant to condemn the practice of keeping "literary workshops." "It is reported," said the resolution, "that a prolific pen contrives by active, unworthy devices, to triple its means, by hiring humble assistants, from whom he buys work at so much the page. We have now the spectacle of a man coming down from the throne of genius to step into the mud

* It is not easy to make out the origin of this bitter quarrel; it is told very obscurely in the "*Fabrique des Romans*," p. 42. Jacquot says that the letters were "traps" for Dumas, but they have the air of being genuine applications for employment as a literary workman in the great workshop. And such is Dumas's version.

of traffic, and setting up a shop for thought." * He called on the society, without, however, mentioning any particular name, to brand this corrupt practice with its distinct condemnation. The meeting, at which was present the President, Viennet, of the Academy, Félix Pyat, Masson, Molé-Gentilhomme, the "Bibliophile Jacob," Maquet, and others, was hesitating a little as to the danger of embroiling itself with such an adversary, when suddenly the door opened, and Dumas himself was announced. He strode in, poked the grave president facetiously in the stomach, with a "How goes it, my dear boy?" ran over to Maquet, and wrung him by the hand. "How are you, gentlemen? I see you are holding a meeting. Confound it, if I am in the way, say so. I just dropped in to see if my friend Pommier here had a few half-crowns for me. Any cash about you, Pommier? By-the-bye, what's all this?—talking of me, it seems!"

The president had risen from his academic chair, and remained standing, with a grave air. Dumas coolly dropped into the seat; the other then walked to the fireplace. Some one handed our hero the paper of

* The extraordinary inflation which the French import into business documents could not be better illustrated than by some passages from this memorial: "This man should not be allowed to fling away the mask and set himself up as a *coryphée* of shame. He should not lay his hand on Reputation, *that white-winged maid*, to drag her through the mire, and *violate her* before the public gaze."

charges. He glanced over them with a sort of disdainful contempt, but presently became angry. "Accuse me of keeping a workshop?" he cried furiously. "It's a lie, a calumny! Assistants in writing my stories! I deny it. I will take my oath I never had any."

"There is no allusion to you," said an obsequious member.

"No matter," replied Alexander, "it's transparent; every one will see who is intended. I can prove it to be false, for I can show the original MS. of every one of the thirty-six volumes that have appeared this year, and all in my handwriting."

"That would be a fair test," said another, "so suppose we——"

The great author was seen to turn pale.* He was about to be taken at his word. He looked round furiously. No one spoke.

"What is all this humbug? Am I in the witness box to be cross-examined in this style? Suppose I have done some stories in partnership. I don't deny

* Jacquot states, that when the existence of the system began to be believed, and editors were growing suspicious, Dumas began to recopy his stories, assisted by his son, whose writing, "by a strange and novel caprice of chance," was exactly alike. On comparing the writing of father and son, not the slightest resemblance will be found—the father's being round, large, and flowing; the son's upright and angular. There was a great deal of unscrupulousness, and some inaccuracies, in these attacks: but the substance was true.

it, but it is with only one man ; and there he is, Maquet ! ”

At this confession there were loud murmurs.

“ Why, you denied it solemnly a moment since.”

Then the president interposed with a smile :

“ It is merely ‘ the FIRM OF MOIROUD AND Co. ! ’ ” Alluding to a well-known play,—a piece of wit that was soon all over Paris. The society passed a resolution to the effect that “ it was urgent to regulate the principles of collaboration in literary works.”

Dumas, however, snapped his fingers at a mere society of the kind. He wanted to make money, and money he *would* make. Such was the end of this extraordinary scene, and which was the cause of some scandal.*

But he had inflamed the rage of his enemies by declaring that this enemy had himself come to him with offers of romances. A few weeks later, Jacquot (or “ De Mirecourt ” as he called himself) borrowed twenty pounds, cast the information he had received into the form of a bitter pamphlet, which he wrote in four days, and of which not a copy was to be obtained within a day or two of publication. It was entitled—
MANUFACTORY OF NOVELS, OR THE FIRM OF DUMAS
AND Co.

Vide “ Fabrique des Romans,” p. 26.

With a terrible candour the most minute details were given of the entire "system" of the great writer—names, authorities, references, which every reader could verify for himself. The scandal and amusement was great. Mallefille, who was spoken of as "the foreman of the shop," challenged the pamphleteer. Dumas, taking his favourite pacific view, summoned his traducer to the courts, who was sentenced to fifteen days' imprisonment, but without costs or seizure of the pamphlet, important testimony to the truths of his statements. The attacks, therefore, were continued in the *Silhouette*, in whose office a sturdy young man appeared one day, conducting himself with much violence, tearing up and scattering all the papers. This proved to be young Dumas. On the following day two officers presented themselves at Jacquot's house, with a challenge on the part of the fiery young Dumas. The great man himself, always consistent in his caution in regard to such encounters, was scarcely entitled to shelter himself behind a deputy, and Jacquot, who was sufficiently *spirituel*, was not slow to avail himself of the opening. He rang the bell, and there appeared to the astonished officers a nurse carrying the infant child of the house.

"This is *my* son," he said.

"This is a very unbecoming joke," said the officers.

“No,” replied the other. “This child is as much entitled to appear for me as M. Dumas’s is for him. Let him *formally* authorise his son to appear for him, and I am content.”

This was an awkward dilemma, and the arrangements did not proceed farther. Alexander possessed an amazing stock of impudence and *blague*, which enabled him to carry off what would have seriously damaged, if not overwhelmed, another. He was, according to a phrase which is often only conventional, “privileged” in the fullest extent of the term. The worst that could befall him was to have it said, “it was so like that *farceur*!”

At this place we shall consider the “system” of this wonderful spoliator, or “conqueror” as he would style himself, so far as it applies to his novels. Nothing to approach it in the annals of literature has ever been recorded.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SYSTEM OF "CONQUESTS."

DUMAS, as we have seen, had already applied his "system" to the dramas which he had produced; and the most curious feature in his proceedings was that in producing his very first piece, "Henry III.," he should have applied it in the boldest and most wholesale way. This would incline us to believe that his faith was genuine in his absurd theory of "conquering" ideas from preceding writers, and that his treatment stamped an air of originality on what he "arranged." However this might have been, he contented himself at that time with conquering the ideas of dead writers. But when he came to deal with stories, and had "orders" for half-a-dozen at a time, with so many volumes to be supplied, the works of deceased writers would not suffice. An "idea" from Scott or Pigault-Lebrun would be of poor assistance when a volume had to be made up. Ideas of the living, which were

new, unpublished stories written by young fellows of spirit which he could purchase and publish, would be valuable aids in making money. And here it must be said that his *theory*, if faithfully and honestly carried out, might not be so indefensible. We might conceive a man with extraordinary energy, and a picturesque power of filling others with his own conceptions, surrounding himself with a body of earnest and clever young men. With them he would plan out his story, receive their suggestions, map out a chapter for one, a passage for another, and so fill them all with his own spirit and interest in the narrative, that it would become stamped with his nature and character. If he went over the work when finished, altering and touching, it would have a farther claim to being considered his own work or inspiration. There are a few of Dumas's books which seem to have been written on this principle. But he very soon cast it aside impatiently, and entered on what can only be called a system of imposture.

To say nothing of the grand system of signing his name to other men's productions, he adopted, "in the course of trade," other shifts of even a more dishonest kind. This was one of his grand arts for earning money, viz., to make the same piece do duty in various shapes. "Blanche de Beaulieu" was a short tale that

is found in his first attempt at story-telling in the *Nouvelles Contemporaines*. It appeared again as "La Rose Rouge," in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*,* thirdly in the "Souvenirs d'Antony," a batch of short tales, the title, we may suppose, being meant to reassert that he was the hero of his outrageous play; fourthly in "Les Salmagundis," and fifthly (to fill up the volume) at the close of "La Dame de Monsoreau," as "Le Cocher de Cabriolet." It made several reappearances of the same kind, besides supplying the subject of the drama, "Angèle." But the most amazing feat in this direction was his ingenious dealing with the "Chevalier d'Harmenthal." This is said to have been wholly the work of Maquet, but it certainly belongs to the class of works which have been inspired and in great part written by himself, and which were easily distinguishable. A play was constructed out of this novel by another of his coadjutors (Brunswick), with the title of "Une Conspiration sous le Régent." This was utilizing his materials pretty well; but the first workman, Maquet, was called in, who was set to work to throw the play into the shape of a story, which now

* 1st. Ser. vol. iii. 1831. The reader may be referred generally to the amusing passages in Quérard's "Supercheries," which are devoted to an *exposé* of Dumas, and which are written with a controversial vigour and wit worthy of Bentley; to the "Fabrique des Romans," already quoted; to De Mirecourt's "Les Contemporains;" and to articles of Granier de Cassagnac, in the *Presse*.

stands as "La Fille du Régent." For each of these works large sums were obtained, and each was read and admired ; and it must be said that all three are surprisingly interesting.* It has been mentioned what an ambitious scheme he had proposed to himself, viz., to write the whole history of France in the form of a romance. A great deal of this task he accomplished, and in the most spirited manner ; and this enthusiasm for one subject is certainly evidence of his personal share in these works. The figures of the Louis's, Richelieus, Pompadours, etc., are sketched with a light and rather careless touch ; but it is impossible not to admit the dash and colour with which the whole is invented. "Gaule et France" belonged to this series. But if this historical narrative is not nearly so entertaining, it is an amusing specimen of his manner. When he was writing it and "Isabel de Bavière," he was in despair at his own ignorance of French history, and a friend, who happened to drop in, suggested Thierry and some other works of the kind. This opened new regions to him, but the curious were astonished to find that he had done more than consult these useful works. He had paid these authors his

* These three pieces, said to be by different writers, illustrate what has been said as to his inspiration or direction. The touch, spirit, and plan of Alexander is to be seen in them all.

favourite compliment of incorporating large portions of their work with his own, as will be seen by a comparison of a passage or two :

THIRRY.

"Letters on the History of France."

The king thought it prudent to spend the night in the Episcopal Palace. The following morning at dawn he left the town with his followers.—P. 388.

The people accustomed themselves to look on it—parliamentary monarchy—as the defender of its rights. It had played an independent part at the time of the Fronde, sank under the absolute monarchy of Louis XIV., was crushed under Louis XV., re-established under Louis XVI., and aided in the recall of the States-General.—P. 329.

His "loans" from Chateaubriand were no less serious.

CHATEAUBRIAND.

"Etudes Historiques."

Alaric survived only a short time. The Goths turned aside the waters of Busentum. They dug a ditch in the middle of its dried-up channel, and there laid the body of their chief, with a large quantity of silver and precious stuffs; then turned the Busentum into its channel again, and a rapid torrent flowed over the grave. The slaves employed in this task were then strangled.—P. 105.

DUMAS.

"Gaule et France."

The king did not venture on that night to sleep anywhere but in the Episcopal Palace, and the following morning, at dawn, he left the town with his followers.—P. 220.

The people accustomed itself to see in it, that is, the parliament, their own representative. It had played a great part in the Fronde, became insignificant under the absolute monarchy of Louis XIV., was crushed under Louis XV., re-established under Louis XVI., and from the expiring exercise of its powers emanated the recall of the States-General.—P. 315.

DUMAS.

"Gaule et France."

Alaric died. The soldiers turned aside the stream of the Busento, dug out a ditch for their commander in the middle of its dried-up bed, and laid over him a quantity of gold and precious stuffs. They then turned back the water of the Busento into its channel again, and the river flowed over the grave. They strangled every slave that had been employed in this funeral task.—P. 12. *

It is quite evident that these passages were copied from the original works, the copyist changing a word here and there as he wrote.

But this is nothing to his Jacques Ortis, which carried the theory of appropriation to a most ludicrous pitch. It was signed on the title, "By Alexander Dumas." It was presently discovered : 1st. That this was a mere translation of a work of Ugo Foscolo's, called "*Ultime Littere di Jacopo Ortis* ;" 2nd. That even the translation was *not* by Dumas himself ; 3rd. That it professed to be by Fiorentino, one of his aides, or deputies ; and 4th. That even *this* translation had been pirated, and was the work of another ! It seems there were four translations already existing, and one by Gosselin had been selected, the words being duly altered here and there. This is the most ingeniously complicated piece of imposition on record. His henchman inserted a preface, which bears every token of having been written by the great man himself, and which, taken with the work itself, is perhaps unique as a piece of cool effrontery.*

* "M. Dumas is a worthy rival of Foscolo's. Ortis belongs to him of right : it is at once his conquest and his inheritance. Nature, which so often repeats itself in the human countenance, has also produced souls which are as like as sisters. In this way the poet who comes last in the order of time is inspired by the work of his predecessors—the same blood boils in his veins. In such a case the translator does not reproduce, he creates for the second time. Dumas had only to turn his ear,

On another occasion, when writing his "Impressions de Voyage," he coolly inserted a little tale of Méry's, which had appeared only a few days before. His "Adventures of John Davy" was taken and cut out of the *Revue Britannique*; his "Albine" translated from the German; while "Le Capitaine Aréna" was founded on "Terence le Tailleur," in the same journal. Fiorentino wrote the agreeable "Corricolo" and "Speronare," which are yet scarcely sprightly enough; for the reader will see that it is only in the last three chapters the master himself comes on the scene, with those personal revelations in which no one approaches him. This style which reflects the man to an exceptional degree, is, indeed, the true test for deciding what share he took in his own books, i. e., the books which he offered for sale. Any one who has read everything to which his name is attached, would find it easy to point out what was his own work and what that of other people, and the result quite agrees with what is supposed to be known as to the true authorship. The works of his "men" can be readily distinguished, and some are exceedingly dull. "Ascanio," "Amaury," and "Les Deux Diane," were said to

and found the voice vibrating at his heart. Which of the two poets wrote first is merely a matter of dates."

have been written by Paul Meurice; "Georges, the Planter," was the work of Mallefille, and "Fernande" that of Hippolyte Auger. Some amusing *contretemps* were connected with these works, as the master grew careless. The author of "Amaury," wishing to commend himself to his patron, mentioned in his first chapter the propriety of the great man being received at the Academy. Dumas never looked at either proofs or MSS., and thus, in his own supposed work, he is found lauding himself with gross compliments. The author of the story went to St. Petersburg, and waited on the bookseller, proprietor of a magazine there. As an introduction he reminded him that he was already publishing a serial tale of his, called "Fernande," in his magazine. The other shook his head, and said he did not know it; but he was publishing a story of Dumas's. The author was actually able to show him a letter which he had in his pocket asking for a fresh portion of the story.* The ingenious Alexander had changed the title from "Fernande" to "Olympe."

Jacquot made this statement in reference to "Fernande" in 1855, and it is proof of his accuracy that it should have drawn forth a letter from the author, who admits that it is circumstantially true.

* It is stated that this scene took place in presence of Montferrand the architect.

The letter itself proves in an amusing fashion the wholesale character of the great Alexander's "business." "I am in truth," wrote Auger, "the author of the story that M. Dumas published in France under the name of 'Fernande,' and which previously made its appearance at St. Petersburg under that of 'Olympe.' I sold it before completed to Porcher, the ticket-dealer—or, if you prefer the title, the ticket-buyer." This shows that Porcher dealt in other matters besides tickets, and that Alexander employed him to deal with young authors, and in this way secured a supply of stories to which he could put his own name. Auger had written about one-half, when he succeeded in thus disposing of it for a sum of fifty pounds. Then Porcher revealed that he had purchased it for the great man, "who was enchanted with what he had read, and longed to see the author." Much flattered, and pressed by numerous letters from the great novelist, the young fellow completed his task, and was not a little surprised to see it appear under the name of so distinguished a writer. He frankly confessed that necessity was his law in the matter, and the truth was, there was no opening at any publisher's for anything that was not signed Dumas, or connected with that name. This statement speaks volumes as to the state of the market,

and the writer is very happy in using the word "trade-mark," as applied to the name of the novelist, which was duly stamped on all sorts of wares. When he returned from Russia, he renewed his relations with the firm ; but though he supplied "goods," he found that payment was not made. He succeeded in getting back his MSS., but complains that a grand idea was stolen and worked into the "*Mohicans de Paris*." "In conclusion," expostulates the writer, "let me beg you to level your censures against the publishers, who are in truth the accomplices of this too-celebrated novelist." This was indeed going to the root of the matter, for the publishers encouraged this scandalous traffic-dealing with a man who was notoriously extravagant and always in difficulties. No better proof of the deadly influence of such a system could be given than the one of Murger, a writer well able to stand on his own, whose "*Vie de Bohème*" is a remarkable book, and who, unless he had broken free from this literary bondage, would have found his talents stifled, and have always remained in obscurity.

Dumas' shifts and tricks in this department it would be impossible to follow. A minor but highly profitable piece of charlatanerie was his bringing the expansion of type and the filling sheets to the rank of an art. The feats he performed were incredible.

What with spaced lines, lines with only a word in each, pages of only a few lines, chapters of two or three pages, with large blanks at head and foot, he contrived to swell two tiny volumes, worth a franc apiece, into half-a-dozen large octavos, which were charged thirty francs to the librarians. With these tricks, reprinting and renaming his own pieces, and thus making them do duty several times over, republishing the works of the dead as his own, and signing his own name to the works of the living, he ought certainly to enjoy the title of being the greatest spoliator extant. At the present time anyone who would wish to purchase all his works would find himself in possession of repetitions of the same pieces under all sorts of shapes. Thus, "*Mes Mémoires*," which ran to over thirty volumes, began to flag early, and were filled out with old prefaces, with accounts of Napoleon, of the war in La Vendée, of the Duchess of Berry's arrest ; all of which had figured on other occasions as separate volumes.

It was a happy day, however, for him when the idea suggested itself of the long *feuilleton* running to eight or sixteen volumes, with the continuation as long, and a farther continuation beyond. There it was that his soul found a stage worthy of its dreams. In this department also he found the ad-

vantage of such a coadjutor as Maquet. Maquet is, indeed, credited with the *sole* and entire authorship of the following romances: "Le Chevalier d'Harmental," "Les Trois Mousquetaires," "Vingt Ans Après," "Le Vicomte de Bragelonne," "Sylvandire," "Le Comte de Monte Christo," "La Guerre des Femmes," "La Reine Margot," "Une Fille du Régent," "Le Bâtard de Mauléon," "Le Chevalier de Maison Rouge," "La Dame de Monsoreau." * These, indeed, are the choicest and best of the *répertoire*. Against this view there is a great deal to be urged. In the first place, Maquet's *sole* authorship has not been proved. Secondly, it is remarkable that Maquet's own performances, of which there are many, though poor enough, do not deal with the same romantic, dashing subjects, and have had little or no success. In England his name is not known at all, and, but for the connection with Dumas, would be unknown in France. Finally, the style, conception, plan, spirit, the witty dialogues, appeals to curiosity, and exciting situations,

* A new and handsome edition of Quérard's "Supercheries Littéraires" has recently been issued, with additions, which he himself had prepared not long before his death. The editors, however, state that they have thought fit to make no addition to the article on "Dumas." This is the more to be regretted, as De Mirecourt states in a note to his article in "Les Contemporains," that Quérard was in possession of a list furnished by Maquet, in which the latter sets out all the romances of which he was the author.

are exactly in the manner of those letters, pieces of autobiography, and stories which are beyond dispute his own. Those who knew him, his impetuous character, his bombast, love of theatrical effect, and *honest belief* in his own romance, declare that his books exactly reflect his character. The truth is, there are no other works that resemble them, and are so *individual* in their tone.

But it must not be denied that Maquet had a most important share in the "confection" of the novels, and was fairly entitled to share the honour. But the spirit, the inspiration, the planning out of every chapter even, was beyond dispute Dumas's. The fate of Auguste Maquet, who is believed to have had an important share in, perhaps, the most popular romances ever written, is not a little hard. He has had but indifferent profit, and no glory, for it is only to the curious that his honours are known. He was little more than thirty when a play of his, called "Bathilde," was given by the manager of the Renaissance to the great Alexander, to be handled after his peculiar fashion. This led to the connection which was to be so advantageous to both. He had been a teacher in a seminary, but failed to pass for his doctor's degree, and then, like so many others, took to literature as

a profession.* He practised so successfully that he received the Legion of Honour, and was named president of the Commission of Authors.†

The name of Maquet suggests that of other assistants, amongst whom that of Anicet Bourgeois was conspicuous. This dramatist was a master in the art of "knowing the boards," and had a surprising power in putting a good melodrama with an exciting story on the stage. He was the author of some two or three hundred pieces, some of which had extraordinary success, such as "Latude," "Le Pendu," "La Dame de Saint Tropez." It speaks a great deal in favour of Dumas's genius and originality that he was so able to assimilate the talent of those who worked with him; for Anicet Bourgeois, under his inspiration, was a different writer from the Anicet Bourgeois that worked by himself. Again, Lhérie (alias *Brunswick*) and De Ribbing, separated from him, have made no mark, and are unknown to the world; and Maquet, as we have just seen, when alone and unassisted, has been utterly unsuccessful. The lady who wrote under the name of "La Comtesse Dash," Madame de Saint Mars, a poor, frothy writer, was said to have been

* It is curious in France how many men who are reduced in circumstances, or have met with a reverse, "take to writing" for a livelihood; much as a young girl of condition would become a governess.

† *Vapereau, Dict.*

another of his assistants. All this was during the palmy days of his organised system. Years later, when he was going about, a sort of literary adventurer, he became utterly careless of decency, and set his name to anything that was brought to him, or that he could appropriate.*

De Mirecourt was always singularly well informed, and his accuracy is proved by a letter of Alexander's, written some twenty years after the appearance of the "*Maison Dumas & C^{nie}*." It was addressed to Meurice, a favourite journeyman of the great man's. "My dear Meurice," it ran, "one day you asked me with my name to do you a service which my purse could not. I give it to you in the heartiest confidence, with pride almost, for you are one of those rare men, taken either as poet or prose writer, whose work the foremost of us would be proud to endorse, even with closed eyes. You have written under my name the "*Deux Diances*," and the book has had as

* It has been already mentioned that he used to appeal to his various works being in his own handwriting as proof of his own true position. This he might do with plausibility, as nearly all authors who have facility in writing can write original matter nearly twice as fast as they can copy. With Dumas it was really the reverse. I have found in all directions proof that he found the task-work of copying about as easy as composition. The habit of "arranging" or "conquering" the products of other writers gradually led to a certain helplessness and stagnation in his ideas; and as he was always industrious, he did not mind sparing his labour on copying.

great a success as though it had been from my pen." This was a frank confession.

But though we smile at this amusing catalogue, it is impossible not to see how his trade system has demoralised literature in France. On the stage he has had the worst influence, and into the literary profession he has imported the associations of a handicraft. "In your pages," runs the terrible invective of Jacquot, "vice exhibits the most agreeable attractions, and crime is made to excite interest rather than disgust. You scatter abroad this mad and galvanic style of literature, which stirs up the blood and kindles the passions. Thanks to you, and to the *cooks* that work under you, the public now turns from all wholesome food. It can only relish ragouts frightfully spiced. All that is false seduces it; all that is extravagant, enchants, and, seated before you in the saddle, it capers along on the fantastic mule of caprice. Should any one try to get it back to the high road of common sense, he only spurs the brute the more. We have come to this that really good books are unnoticed; a good style has lost its charm; what is true, appears *fade*; and what is natural, a bore."

We may, therefore, lament that this spirited writer did not rely on his own resources, which were abundant, and, for the reader, captivating. These deserve all

praise. We may join with Théophile Gautier, who entered warmly on his defence.* “It is really the secret labourer who is to blame, not the person who signs. For Scribe and Alexander Dumas will be always what they are without their assistants, while it is not at all evident that, without them, their assistants would be a Scribe or an Alexander Dumas.” So long after as the year 1853, when the controversy had grown cold, he himself could not resist this challenge, in which it is hard not to sympathise with him. “At this date I have left the *Presse* open, the *Siècle* open also, and the *Constitutionnel*. I have just one story to furnish to the *Pays*. Now, gentlemen, the doors are all open for you; the columns ready; besides these journals, you have the *Patrie*, the *Moniteur*, *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Write us a ‘Three Musketeers,’ a ‘Monte Christo.’ Don’t wait until I am dead to do it. With all the books I have to write, let me relax, by allowing me to read *your* books.” He expressed this even more happily in a jest, which went round the cafés. He had been entertaining a pleasant party, convulsing them with his wit and stories; and when taking leave, said, in answer to their compliments, “Yet to-morrow they will be saying that I had collaborators to help me!” And heartily, too, we can

* Histoire de L’Art Dramatique.

join in the half-jesting, but not less enthusiastic, praise of the late Mr. Thackeray.

“Other people may not much like this extract, madam, from your favourite novel, but when you come to read it *you* will like it. I suspect that when you read that book which you do love, you read it *à deux*. Did you not yourself pass a winter at Bath, when you were the belle of the assembly? Was there not a Lord Orville in your case, too? As you think of him eleven lustres pass away. You look at him with the bright eyes of those days, and your hero stands before you, the brave, the accomplished, the simple, the true gentleman, and he makes the most elegant of bows to one of the most beautiful young women the world ever saw, and he leads you out to the cotillon, to the dear forgotten music. Hark to the horns of Elfland, blowing, blowing! *Bonne vieille*, you remember their melody, and your heartstrings thrill with it still. Of your heroic heroes, I think our friend Monseigneur Athos, Count de la Fère, is my favourite. I have read about him from sunrise to sunset with the utmost contentment of mind. He has passed through how many volumes? Forty? Fifty? I wish, for my part, there were a hundred more, and would never tire of him rescuing prisoners, punishing ruffians, and running scoundrels through the midriff

with his most graceful rapier. Ah! Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, you are a magnificent trio. I think I like d'Artagnan in his own memoirs best. I bought him years and years ago, price fivepence, in a little parchment-covered, Cologne-printed volume, at a stall in Gray's Inn Lane. Dumas glorifies him and makes a marshal of him, if I remember rightly. The original d'Artagnan was a needy adventurer, who died in exile very early in Louis XIV.'s reign. Did you ever read the 'Chevalier d'Harmenthal'? Did you ever read the 'Tulipe Noire'?—as modest as a story by Miss Edgeworth. I think of the prodigal banquets to which this Lucullus of a man has invited me with thanks and wonder. To what a series of splendid entertainments he has treated me. Where does he find the money for these prodigious feasts? They say that all the works bearing Dumas' name are not written by him. Well? does not the chief cook have *aides* under him? Did not Rubens's pupils paint on his canvases? Had not Lawrence assistants for his backgrounds? For myself, being also *du métier*, I confess I would often like to have a competent, respectable, and rapid clerk for the business part of my novels, and on his arrival at eleven o'clock, would say, 'Mr. Jones, if you please, the archbishop must die this morning in about five pages. Turn to article "Dropsy" (or what

you will) in *Encyclopædia*.~ Take care there are no medical blunders in his death. Group his daughters, physicians, and chaplains round him. In Wales' "London," letter B, third shelf, you will find an account of Lambeth, and some prints of the place. Colour in with local colouring. The daughter will come down and speak to her lover in his wherry at Lambeth Stairs, &c., &c. Jones (an intelligent young man) examines the medical, historical, topographical books necessary, his chief points out to him in Jeremy Taylor (fol. London, MDCLV.) a few remarks such as might befit a dear old archbishop departing this life. When I come back to dress for dinner the archbishop is dead on my table, in five pages, medicine, topography, theology, all right, and Jones has gone home to his family some hours. Sir Christopher is the architect of St. Paul's. He has not laid the stones or carried up the mortar. There is a great deal of carpenter's and joiner's work in novels, which surely a smart professional hand might supply."

CHAPTER VII.

THE PALACE OF MONTE CHRISTO.

1844.

A CHARACTER like that of Dumas, supposed to be "coining" money, making it easily and spending it more freely, would be incomplete without it indulged in the extravagance of a "folly." Most men of these Eastern tastes, in the hope of dazzling their contemporaries with a monument of magnificence, have only succeeded in perpetuating the recollection of their own childishness. Paris was soon to be talking—and he longed for nothing so much—of the last sumptuous freak of the opulent novelist. Within three years he was to dazzle the vacant gossips of the Boulevards, who are ready to cry "Charmant! Magnifique! Ravisant!" over a child's new toy, with no less than two wonders,—a Moorish palace and a splendid theatre.

He had finished the first portion of "The Three Musketeers," and was wishing to find some quiet spot where he could write quietly, and be secure from the

invasion of cheerful friends. He thought of St. Germain, and hurried down there. M. Collinet let out the "Pavillon of Henry IV." in apartments, and agreed to give him a small suite at the modest rate of ten francs a day. He at once established himself, and was enchanted with the place; it was just what he wanted. He began to make progress with his books. But on Sunday it was suddenly revealed to him that St. Germain was as crowded as the Champs Elysées; the gardens about the "Pavillon of Henry IV." began to fill up of evenings with smokers and coffee-drinkers. Finally his name transpired, his friends found him out, and good-naturedly made expeditions down to see him, when they expected to be entertained handsomely, and to enjoy jovial evenings. This would not do, and he felt he could not remain.

He happened to be wandering on the road between St. Germain and Pecq, when he was struck by the romantic and sylvan air of that part of the country, and the rural cottages with which it was dotted. One of these he was told could be built for three or four thousand francs. Here was the very thing, true ruralising, and not a huge lodging-house. He chose a spot close to Port Marly, sent for an architect named Planté, and explained what he wanted, a neat little cottage with two or three rooms. Before morning,

however, both had expanded their ideas. It would be absurd to go to expense and have a place impossible to turn about in. Thus the estimate gradually mounted from 160*l.* to 500*l.*, from this sum to 1,200*l.*, then to 3,000*l.*, until a plan was settled on, which began with a modest outlay of 7,000*l.*

As soon as the scheme was fairly started, it filled Alexander's mind, and unfolded itself like one of his own gorgeous romances. It began to devour his thoughts, and with them his substance. Thus, as soon as a spot was selected on the side of a hill, all the peasants began to come to him offering him the bits of land that adjoined it, and which he purchased eagerly, with the feeling that he was gradually becoming a landed proprietor. He invited his friends to a breakfast on July 27, 1844, to see the site, and made an engagement with them that on that day three years they were all to come and enjoy the same in the new house. This was like one of the dramatic appointments given in "Monte Christo."

The works were taken in hand. The expenses were frightful. By an ingenious system of what might be called "costly savings," he was led into the most extravagant outlay. Thus a spring was discovered—with such a natural advantage, who could resist the notion?—that would suggest a pastoral lake, with an

island in the centre, and a sort of kiosk on the island. A quarry was found on the ground, which was a substantial hint towards making a vast stone wall that would run all round the property. These *agremens* suggested fresh additions to make the house worthy of the place, which was raised a story, and became a château. The house to be worthy of itself required the most exquisite decoration.

The three years passed by and the day came round. The new house was not quite ready, but Alexander received his friends, as he had agreed to do. A beautiful building, half château, half villa, had risen in the meantime, embowered in trees, and in the centre of a wild garden. It was conspicuous from a distance by its two high campaniles, while the curving lines of its bow-windows below were carried up into the roof. Its white stone walls were covered with exquisite traceries and sculptures copied from those of Jean Goujon at the Louvre, and executed by Choistat, conspicuous in the centre being his arms, with the motto "J'aime qui m'aime." Inside, the walls were decorated from designs by Klagmann; while the "Arabian chamber," after the pattern of the Alhambra, was a marvel of Eastern gorgeousness and decoration. Here the visitor found a couple of Moslems in characteristic costume—theatrical "slaves" whom he had hired and brought

over from Africa. The gardens were charming, all leafy and shaded. On the little island in the lake rose an exquisite little Norman building, intended as a sort of kiosk, covered with exquisite carvings, the designs being by Mansson, a decorator of great eminence. Blending with the sound of falling waters,—for an artificial torrent had been contrived, that tumbled over rocks as artificially arranged,—was heard the chattering of monkeys, the screaming of parrots, while huge barbaric dogs of strange shapes and colour ranged through the groves. Such was “Monte Christo,”* which was now the talk of all Paris.

The cost of this “Folly” has been mentioned, and was said to have reached close on 20,000*l.*, rather a moderate sum for such an extravagance. Later, on his travels, at Algiers and Tunis he ransacked all the bazaars for the richest stuffs, arms, furniture. He carried away doorways from Tunis, and, delighted with some carvings on an Algerian palace, which he could not take away, he contented himself with bringing over the native sculptor who had done the work. These extravagances were the beginning of his ruin. It was almost ludicrous, too, to find that an undertaking

* Various names had been suggested for this fairy palace, such as “Villa D’Artagnan;” but Mélingue the actor, on driving down to see it, laughingly bade the coachman drive to “Monte Christo,” which the man understood and did so. The name was retained.

commenced with the view of finding quiet and retirement, should have led him into the most reckless hospitality, the flatteries and admiration of his friends being only too acceptable; and, indeed, the magnificence of the place was scarcely meant for selfish enjoyment. This hospitality led to multiplied expenses. Carriages and horses had to be kept for the purpose of bringing the friends to and from the station. More frequently still, the friends arrived in their own equipages, and the host soon found himself under the necessity of building a range of stabling and coach-houses for their carriages and horses. The Kiosk on the pond was intended for the master's private bureau, where the great works were composed, or at least "arranged," under an azure blue ceiling all studded with stars. Painters of his acquaintance found a studio ready for them. Shields, each containing the name of one of his works, ran round the house. The walls inside were decorated with verses of the Koran. Sculptures, bronzes, paintings, rich stuffs from the East and from the West, were heaped up together in incongruous masses; but with it all there was a want of elegance, and more the sumptuous display of newly-gotten wealth rather than refinement or elegance.

When it was completed he gave a magnificent

banquet in honour of the event. More than six hundred guests were invited, representing all that was distinguished in rank, art, or letters. He had the pleasure of exhibiting his magnificence, his negroes, his stuffs, and treasures, to his heart's content. A piece "of occasion" was then presented at the theatre. It seems incredible, but the title of this production was literally,

"SHAKESPEARE AND DUMAS."

He really believed that in this way he was paying genuine honour to the great Englishman, and honestly supposed that the homage was becoming and gracious, he being the foremost writer in Europe. With his palace and grounds before him, his delusion was akin to that of Elliston walking in the coronation procession on the stage, who was so carried away by the pageant, of which he was the centre, that for a moment he believed that he was King, and bestowed his blessing on the pit. Nor were the French wits wholly justified in their ridicule of his proceedings, as this was but an extravagant development of points in the national character, which always shows a tendency to such theatrical effect.

He, indeed, affected to have "invented" St. Germain, to have made it his own. He says he completely transformed it; from a lonely spot he made

it a gay and crowded place. Even Louis-Philippe, he hints, was envious of this magic power. Its deserted streets filled again. He was appointed Commandant of its National Guard. He hired the theatre, and brought down the best artistes from Paris to act in his plays, whom he entertained sumptuously; and for its stage was even good enough to prepare a translation of the "Hamlet" of Shakespere, an honoured name he was always particularly eager to have coupled with his own. This was the first work that inspired his own muse, and he admired it; but thinking the conclusion defective, he added a more effective one of his own. The ghost appears at the end, to the terror of the whole party, and the "ridiculous fencing scene" is got rid of.*

It was produced in September, 1846. Dumas

* The play à la Dumas closes in this fashion. Laertes begs for "Mercy!" The ghost sternly bids him go down to judgment, though he may not then hope indulgence: "Laertes, pray and die!" (*Laertes dies.*) The queen exclaims, "Pity, pity!" The ghost says that it was her love that led her into crime: "Poor woman, the Lord loves those who love. Go; tears have washed away thy shame. Woman below, queen above. Gertrude, hope and die!" (*Gertrude dies.*) The king begs for "Pardon!" The ghost consigns him to Satan: "Go, traitor, go; despair and die!" (*The king dies.*) Hamlet complains piteously of being the only one left, after he himself had been the cause of the death of four persons. "What was in store for him?" The ghost: "Thou shalt LIVE!" (Curtain falls.) This *dénouement* won the praise of *Theophile Gautier*, as being "grand and poetic. The action begins and concludes logically, and the punishment allotted is *sublime*." He allows, however, that perhaps, on the whole, Shakespere's is not less grand or less philosophic.

was to have given Shakespere hospitality at his theatre. The body of the piece was the work of Paul Meurice, but the great master, *i. e.* Dumas, had "bouleversé" some of the situations, touched many of the passages, and furnished the conclusion. His name drew crowds to the place. The railway company announced that the traffic had increased by nearly a thousand persons during the time that he was there. Amazing Dumas! But his account of the influence of his stay on this place is too good not to be given here. "Wherever I go, and how it is I really cannot say, but the fact is so, I bring with me an atmosphere of life and movement which has become proverbial. During my three years' residence the natives—those respectable subjects of the 'Sleeping Beauty in the Wood'—came at last not to know themselves. I had inspired the town with a sort of fever, with which people were taken, very much like the effect of the bite of the Neapolitan spider. The place was raised from the dead: they rode, went to the theatre, let off fireworks on my terrace, brought expressly from Paris." Versailles, he said, grew perfectly dull, and the King at last sent for Montalivet, and asked him what he should do to make Versailles as gay as St. Germain. In spite of waterworks and galas, people would not come. Montalivet suggested that Dumas should be brought to

Versailles. "The king turned his back on him, and would not speak to him for a month."

* Dumas makes him say to the King, "Dumas has fifteen days' imprisonment to work out for refusing to serve as a National Guard. Let him do so at Versailles." This is an amusing instance of his untruthful "swaggering." By the *Gazette des Tribunaux*, it appears that he received this sentence on Jan. 5, 1837. He did not "resuscitate" St. Germain until 1845, or eight years later. He was perpetually being sentenced to terms of imprisonment for neglecting his duty ; and in a preface which he furnished to a work on "Les armes et le duel," by a Paris fencing-master, he relates his troubles after his own amusing fashion.

CHAPTER VIII.

FRESH "SUPERCHERIES."

1844—1846.

WHEN Dumas was driven to extremity by a sort of "strike" on the part of his workmen, especially on the part of Maquet, the foreman, he was compelled to admit them to an equal share of the credit, and to the honour of appearing on the title-page. This is important in France, as we have seen in the case of plays, where authors are duly registered, so that the share of the receipts may be paid to the proper parties. But this is a little inconsistent with the claim of the assistant to have written the whole of *Monte Christo*. When Maquet grew thus troublesome, Dumas *had* to make acknowledgments of the assistance he had received. It was stated that Fiorentino wrote the first portion, Maquet the second, and at the same time that the various episodes are taken from a book called the "*Police Devoilée*" by Peuchet.*

* It is said that the idea of the stories in six monthly volumes was

Dumas himself long after gave his own account of the origin of the famous romance. He had been reading, he says, this book of Peuchet's, and had noticed a history entitled "A Diamond and Vengeance,"—a thing that was simply "idiotic," he says, and which no one could wade through. Still there was "a pearl at the bottom of this oyster." He thought it would do excellently as a subject for a new book, called "Impressions de Voyage in Paris." "I spoke about it to Maquet, with whom I had already worked." Maquet suggested the notion of the Château d'If; and indeed it seems ludicrous that such a masterpiece of dramatic fiction could have come from the inferior pen of Fiorentino, to be hereafter worked up by Dumas. They dined together, and laid out the plan of the first five volumes. "Maquet fancied," says Dumas, "that he was only doing me a friendly service We had already worked together. I consider that he did what was a genuine work of collaboration." *

As a specimen of the personal fashion in which these disputes are conducted in France, it is worth while turning for a few moments to the style

suggested by the example of Richardson. But Alexander's acquaintance with English, or admiration for English models (saving always Shakespeare merci !) was not sufficient to account for such imitation. It, in truth, grew out of interest in the *Feuilleton*.

* "Causeries."

of De Mirecourt's extraordinary pamphlets. Indeed, in all the many attacks on Dumas those of De Lomenie, Janin, De Cassagnac, De Mirecourt, and Querard, it is hard to decide which is the most remarkable for bitter irony and sarcastic power. Here, for instance, is a sketch of Dumas by De Mirecourt (*alias* Jacquot).

"The appearance of M. Dumas is pretty familiar : the figure of a drum-major, the limbs of a Hercules in all their conceivable extension, prominent lips, African nose, curled head, and bronzed face. Scrape his hide and we find the savage underneath. He exhibits the marquis and the negro at once, but the marquis scarcely goes below the skin. The marquis plays his part in public; but in private life he betrays the negro. He flings his gold out of the window, flies from one love to the other : blonde or brunette, it's all one. There we have the marquis. The sex, though it may be dazzled by an ancestral name and a lavish prodigality, is obliged to have recourse to a smelling bottle to neutralize a certain doubtful perfume. *There* we have the negro. Does he travel? He swears at the postillions and pays the guides lavishly. When he arrives at an inn, he stoutly damns the host, turning everything topsyturvy. Marquis again. When he gets home, he drags off his clothes and goes to his

work in the picturesque dishabille of our first parents. He flings himself on the hearth like a Newfoundland dog; he breakfasts, snatching from the coals roasted potatoes, which he devours without peeling. Negro! He loves to frequent palaces and prostrate himself before kings—Marquis! Like the chief of an Indian tribe, to whom travellers present beads, M. Dumas loves everything that glitters. He has ribbons of all kinds, decorations of every country. Toys and *joujoux* turn his brain. Negro all over! In fact, he is a most original and fantastic personage. . . He is a boaster and swaggerer: at one time proud as Satan, at another as familiar as a city grocer; to-day blustering, to-morrow a coward. Caprice is his law, and the first impulse sways him."

This savage and over-coloured picture conveys a not unfaithful, though exaggerated, idea of the man as he appeared to his literary brethren in Paris; nor did he ever relax in the arts which excited their laughter. Who could help smiling at the following?—

It was about this time that a grand plan for a collected edition of all his works was issued. This delightful composition, which came forth in the name of the publishers, but was in truth his own work, set out by declaring that the age was so feverish and flurried, so uncertain and volatile, that the community

would really be obliged to the man who would say to it, "Be ever so *blasé* and changeable, be as capricious as you please, here is one who will follow you through every turning, and supply you with something that will suit your every mood. With any one else the theatre might fairly be considered a complete and entire existence, but with *him* it is only the *prelude*."*

"Popular as his works have been, from his name and general reputation, they are to become far more so now, from the new shape in which they are about to appear, and the low price for which they can be procured. Now the poorest cabin can have its little shelf for these great works, while the lordly castle can get ready its great library to receive the collection. For Dumas is young, in surprisingly good health, and his wit, which pours forth unceasingly, is certain each year to make an addition of forty volumes to the store (!). *Even those who do not like him admire him: but, in truth, all the world loves him.*" This singular invitation was issued in the year 1846. Grotesque as it is, it shines by contrast with another of the same kind, issued seventeen years later, when he sent a circular

* This unmistakeably betrays the authorship. In his letter to Louis-Philippe he had said, "Sire, with me the literary man has only been the *prelude* of the political man." What amuses foreigners who look on at French literary life is the tolerance, and even helplessness, with which the French public accepts transparent *blague*, like what has been recited.

to each of the 48,000 municipalities of France, inviting them to take a set of his works for the good of the people, the whole making a complete library of three hundred volumes, and offering to furnish them for cash at ninepence a volume!

The year after the production of "Monte Christo" his enterprise developed itself enormously. The immense extravagance of his "Castle" had to be defrayed, and in no less than four different journals four stories were "running" under his name. During the year 1845-6 no less than sixty volumes were issued or written, as he complacently styled it, by him. His enemy, Jacquot, made an elaborate calculation to show that this was a sheer impossibility on the part of any author, assuming even that the story was "raced off"—"in sporting style"—without stoppage for thought or deliberation. "Suppose," he said, "that the writer sleeps little, snatches his meals, and that the inspiration is always present—things impossible in the ordinary course of things—the most prolific writer could at best produce but fifteen volumes a year. Not a moment is to be allowed for alterations or corrections of the proofs. The most expert copyist could not write more than 3,900 letters an hour, or 46,800 letters, which makes about sixty of the ordinary pages of a novel, in the day. This would give five volumes

a month, and sixty in the year, but on the terms that he did not stop for an hour, or lose a second. You, therefore," ironically goes on this bitter foe, "from the 1st of January to the 31st of December, work regularly twelve hours a day, sleep little, snatch your meals, never give a moment to pleasure, scarcely travel, are never found abroad—where, then," he asks, "is time to be found for M. Dumas's well-known numerous avocations?" *

* "We saw," writes Mr. Forster, when describing his visit to Paris of a year later, "at the Palais Royal the usual new year's piece, in which Alexandre Dumas was shown in his study beside a pile of quarto volumes five feet high."—*Life of Dickens*, vol. ii., 303.

CHAPTER IX.

EXPEDITION TO AFRICA.

1846.

WE now approach what is, indeed, the oddest episode in the life of this singular being, and which was probably, of all passages in his life, the one to which he looked back with the greatest pride and complacency.

The year 1846 was, perhaps, the most magnificent in his existence. "Monte Christo" had made his name famous in every corner of the world; his stories were being read daily in half-a-dozen newspapers; he was deeply engaged for future services; his gorgeous "Castle," nearly completed, was the wonder of all France; while his theatre, which he boasted would regenerate dramatic art (how many regenerators has it had since!), was slowly rising from the ground. A sort of Eastern magnificence was associated with his name. He was no longer the mere clever popular dramatist and novelist,

but a personage of power and interest, with a mysterious influence, something like that of his own "Joseph Balsamo." But a further distinction was now in store for him. The unlucky "Spanish Marriage," then considered a triumph of diplomacy, had been arranged, and the young Duke of Montpensier was setting out for Madrid. As we have seen, he had taken a fancy to our Alexander, who, with a dogged perseverance, was determined to hold fast by *some* member of the Orleans family. "He had shown me many kindnesses," said Dumas before the Court, "and wished to have me at his marriage. On an occasion so solemn, both for him and for France, he desired to see me at Madrid, as his brother had done at Versailles. 'You and Hugo,' he said, 'should be present at a great national feast like this.'"

One morning the home minister asked him to come and breakfast with him. This was Salvandy, a traveller and academician, but, as will be seen, without much tact. He proposed to Dumas that, after he had attended the marriage at Madrid, he should undertake "a mission"—a word that Frenchmen love—to Africa. The words used by the minister, when addressed to such a tattler, and even boaster, were of the most indiscreet kind. "Algeria" was "the finest country, utterly unknown to our deputies, who

talked about it without ever having seen it, and *who really* required to be enlightened on this great question. To have the country understood by France, it must be visited by a man who understands the people, like you." These were the very words of Salvandy.* He gave him a credit of 400*l.* for expenses. This was often discredited when Alexander boasted of it, but it was admitted by the Minister himself. The same personage further declared that he had done so from the wish that Algiers should be, as it were, popularised, or what would be vulgarly styled "done," by a clever writer. He further made the surprising statement that on other occasions Dumas had been entrusted with "missions" of the same kind.†

Alexander determined to do the thing in state. He took with him three or four friends, among whom was his faithful henchman, Maquet, who was, no doubt, to write the *Travels* that were to appear under the great man's name; Boulanger; Giraud; and his son Alexander, who was now about two-and-twenty. Before leaving,

* When giving explanations on this matter in the Chamber, he was not able to deny having used this language.

† This explains his own statement in the "*Corricolo*." When arrested at Naples, a few years before, he was able to show "a letter from the Minister of Public Instruction charging me with a literary mission in Italy, to find out what progress education had made in that country." Guizot's letter of recommendation, which he quotes elsewhere, is couched in the strongest terms of interest and protection.

he sold 2000*l.* worth of railway stock, at a loss. In addition to the ministerial allowance he spent over a thousand pounds of his own; trying, he said, to maintain the glory of France.*

He declares, on another occasion, that he went in the capacity of "Historiographer" to the Duke of Montpensier, or with the view of presenting a fitting picture of the fêtes to the people of France. But this function he does not appear to have fulfilled. He was in the middle of an exciting feuilleton, the well-known Joseph Balsamo, which readers of the *Presse* were devouring; but this was a minor consideration.

They arrived at Madrid in the month of October, 1846, Alexander having three huge trunks bursting, he tells us, with new clothes, with six chests containing guns and pistols, which the Custom-house passed in the most complimentary manner. He attended all the fêtes, and signed the marriage-contract. "I went," he told a crowded court the year after, "so completely in the capacity of a guest, that I was the only *Frenchman who assisted at this private marriage*. Then I received the grand cordon of Charles III.,

* Guizot, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, also sent for him, and after being closeted with him for two hours, gave him a passport couched in particularly strong terms, and in which Dumas is described as "travelling on a mission from the Minister of Public Instruction." It will be necessary to bear the facts in mind, as there was later a rather shabby attempt at repudiating the responsibility of the transaction.

which was not given to me as a literary man, but to me—" here the speaker slapped his chest—" to me, Alexander Dumas Davy, Marquis de la Pailletterie, the friend of the Duke of Montpensier!" *

By the middle of November he was at Cadiz, looking for the steamer which the minister had promised should take him to Oran, and found the *Vélocé*, a war-steamer of 220 horse-power, which plied as a despatch-boat between Oran and Tangiers. The commander presented him with a complimentary letter from Marshal Bugeaud's secretary, apologising for the delay, explaining that they had given orders that the vessel should stop at Cadiz, find out M. Dumas, and send up the country to look for him. They, too, had received a letter from the minister, and the writer hoped that M. Dumas would come with all speed to Algiers, where they would treat him with honour.

Alexander was enchanted; indeed his head seems to have been quite upset. He assumed that ship, and everything in it, was to be his; and the way he expresses himself again recalls Boswell, to whom he had a strong likeness. He tells with delight how the captain welcomed him at the gangway, and how he

* No wonder, as the report says, that there were here "diverse sensations." The scene defied description. Judges, counsel, all did not so much laugh as have a silent and exquisite sense of enjoyment.

"was received to the sound of the boatswain's whistle." He describes his state cabins, with their gilding still fresh, for this boat had not long before been fitted up for a journey of the royal family, and how he was rowed ashore in state in the ship's gig. He was enchanted with everything he saw; and the account of his travels has a gaiety and a charm that is certainly his own. At Gibraltar he was welcomed by Sir Robert Wilson, "a charming old man," who made him a present of some Moorish pottery, which Dumas had admired.

The voyage was delightful; they went ashore and shot and hunted; visited bazaars, where Alexander loaded himself with costly ornaments and furniture for his new palace, and dropped anchor at Tetuan. There the captain for the first time spoke to him of the fate of a number of French officers and soldiers who had fallen into the hands of Abd-el-Kader. Negotiations, it seems, had been going on for the ransom of the prisoners, who were to be released at Mellilâ; but the whole was uncertain, from the savage temper of the Arabs. Here was an adventure suited to the eager temper of the present commander of the *Vélocé*. He was eager that "his

* Dumas's works should be read in the bright open page of the charming little Brussels edition, a pirated one, we believe. The cheap Lévy edition, with the type crowded up, is intolerable to look at. The broad spaces and scattered lines are really in harmony with his style.

vessel" should appear before the port, which was reasonably objected to, as the sight of a vessel would only frighten the Arabs.

When Dumas was giving evidence, or rather making his immortal speech at the trial before alluded to, he spoke of this matter. "These gentlemen," he said, "Messrs. de Girardin and Véron, wish to know what I was doing out there. I will tell them. I knew that by a prompt intervention the prisoners could be released. I saved twelve of my countrymen from execution. It was *I who charged myself with the duty of rescuing Colonel Courby de Cogniard*. It was *I* who undertook the task of looking for the prisoners in the interior to save them." Surely a brilliant and gallant exploit, for which his countrymen ought to have been grateful. But there was not a word of truth in the whole. Rather he was under a delusion, which was harmless in one of his temperament, and firmly believed that he had done the work. The prisoners were to be received on board the *Veloce*; the *Veloce* was under his direction, he and his friends were excited over the matter, wept, and were overjoyed, and the great Alexander came to fancy that he had carried out the whole. "*It was I,*" he says in his next sentence, "*who had under my orders the vessel that was to bring them away. This vessel I took to Melilla, and brought the*

prisoners to Djemaïr 'Azaouat, *where three thousand persons gave me a dinner*. If you claim 2,000*l.* from me for being in Africa, I saved twelve of my countrymen, which I fancy is well worth the money." This, delivered with emotion, produced "movement" in the court. Never was there such an instance of theatrical delusion : yet he was as genuine, as Don Quixote. Even the banquet was another delusion ; it was given to the prisoners by Colonel Macmahon, the present Marshal, though Dumas and his friends were invited. The most extraordinary feature of the whole is that his own pleasant account of his voyage, "*Le Veloce*," gives a rational and most interesting account of the affair without claiming for him the least credit in the matter.* Tremendously excited, he had sailed, with the good news, for Algiers, but on arriving there found, to his disappointment, that Marshal Bugeaud was absent, and would not return for a fortnight. He resolved to make a voyage to Tunis, "and on this I presented the letter, which placed the *Veloce* at my dis-

* "*Ce fut sur cette base qu'eut lieu, le traité*" (arranged long before Dumas's arrival) "*et qui amena la délivrance des prisonniers, délivrance à qui nous venions d'assister, &c.*" Again, Cabasse, one of the party who had written an account of the matter, assured Jacquot that Dumas had nothing to do with the matter. As regards the banquet, "*Ils, i. e. the prisoners, 'avaient été reçus aux acclamations générales, et le soir, un grand banquet leur devait être offert.*" He further on adds that he and the prisoners were the guests of honour ; but still the entertainment was 'offered' to the prisoners.

position, to Admiral de Rigodie.” He steamed away, had a delightful three weeks’ excursion, saw Carthage, Tunis, and met with adventures, which all who list will find described in “Le Veloce,” duly published on his return to Paris.

But though many were amused and pleased with the account, some sober persons began to look more closely into the matter. Here was a steamer of the navy, executing regular “service,” which is suddenly taken from its duty, and by order of the Minister placed under the control of M. Dumas, that he may visit Tunis and Carthage, and write his agreeable and profitable travels afterwards. There was naturally a grave scandal; and on February 10, 1847, a most mortifying scene for him took place in the Chamber. Castellane, one of the deputies, rose to put a question to the Ministry. Was it true that “a well-known *contractor for stories*”—(at this description there was much merriment)—“had been paid in this way with a sum charged on the budget for indigent letters, for the purpose of making Algiers known to France and to the Chamber? Had he been provided with a vessel at the expense of the State? I say nothing,” continued the deputy, “of the burlesque side of the transaction, but

* “Madame de Rigodie,” says Alexander, in his elegant way, “will permit me to record a charming hour spent with her while the commander received his instructions for the next voyage.”

there is a certain delicacy to be observed as regards the navy and its sailors, to say nothing of the vessel having been used as a Royal packet." The Minister of Marine could only say that he had written to the Marshal, who explained it as a *malentendu*. The vessel was employed on the regular line between Tangiers and Oran, had touched at Cadiz *in its regular course*, and had there taken *this person* on board. The vessel, instead of going to Oran as it ought to have done, went to Algiers, an order of the Marshal's, who was absent, being misinterpreted. The Commandant at Algiers, seeing a vessel arrive, believed that it was charged with a special mission, *the person on board said so* to every one he met—(loud laughter)—so he allowed it to go on. The Marshal was exceedingly annoyed, and declared that the person on board had not the least title to alter its course. The cost was over fifty pounds a day for every day that the vessel was away from its duty. Salvandy, the minister, came in at this moment, and was called to the Tribune. The mission, he said, had been simply for Algeria; nothing had been said about Tunis or Spain. But he really thought it was not consistent with the dignity of the Chamber to ask him to reveal what passed with a man of letters.

But the whole is quite plain. It was an ingenious and delightful piece of fanfaronnade. Arriving in

Algiers on the "bridge of my vessel of 220 horses," with the news of the release of the prisoners, which *he* had effected, the officials were bewildered. He had his gorgeous dresses, his guns, his *suite*, and his passports, with letters from ministers where his "mission" was spoken of. Nothing was more natural than that they should have authorised him to take this tour to Tunis at a charge of nearly a thousand pounds to the country. It was very clever and highly characteristic. It seemed to be always his lot, like most saltimbanques, to be mortified after some more than usually dazzling exhibition. When he had, in homely phrase, "cut a dash," he was certain to be found out. Here was everybody laughing at the "single Frenchman present at the marriage," the commander of the *Veloce*; who was yet spoken of in the most contemptuous terms in the Chamber, as "ce monsieur"—"this person"—who was really secured from rigorous treatment owing to his being a sort of privileged *Farceur*, whose extravagances were only too amusing! "They talk of this paltry sum, yet it cost *me* double! A vessel! Yet did not the English, when

* Even the letter from the Marshal's secretary or deputy, inviting him, is without a signature. But it distinctly tells him to go from Cadiz to Oran, in the regular course of the vessel; and at Oran he was to take another line of packets and go on to Algiers. Yet he says that the officials at Algiers accepted the letter as authority for going to *Tunis*!

Sir Walter Scott was ill, give *him* a man-of-war?" After this absurdity he makes a bitter remark on his countrymen, which has more justice. "We are all like this in France; every reward, every honour irritates and wounds us, when we ourselves are not the object of that reward or honour." But he was so wounded that he sent a challenge, by the faithful Maquet, to Malleville, one of the deputies, who had attacked him. This step was to bring another mortification; for intending to fortify his demand for satisfaction by support from the well known Viennet, who was president of the Society of Men of Letters, the latter declined, on the ground that Dumas had repudiated the title of "man of letters" in open court, on the memorable day when he slapped his breast and said, with fervour, "that he had received his order *not* as a writer but as Alexander Dumas, Marquis de la Pailleterie, friend of the Duke of Montpensier." This unfortunate speech rose in judgment against him; the Academician's answer went about, and this, like so many other attempts of Alexander to vindicate his honour, ended in laughter and mortification.

CHAPTER X.

AT LAW.

1847.

HE had no sooner returned than he found that a serious action at law was waiting for him. This process is still looked back to with amusement, and is one of the most curious, entertaining trials on record. Beside Alexander's share in this business an opera bouffe would have seemed insipid.* The case is indeed unique; and he was naturally not at all indisposed to enjoy the publicity of such an affair. No less than *seven* newspapers were plaintiffs in the action: *Le Siècle*, *Le Commerce*, *La Patrie*, *Le Soleil*, *L'Esprit Public*, and the greater "guns" *Le Constitutionnel* and *La Presse*, directed by Emile de Girardin and Dr. Véron, who were the real plaintiffs. That seven newspapers should be in need of his services, and

* It is impossible to read the report of the trial, the gravity and regulated enjoyment with which the great actor was listened to by both court and audience, without catching some of the enjoyment of the situation.

be aggrieved at his failing to render them, was only a flattering compliment, and more than balanced the inconveniences of the suit.

The court was crammed to suffocation; but on the first day the great Alexander himself did not condescend to be present. The whole proceedings were conducted with a pleasant hilarity, and the counsel of the plaintiffs stated the case with a good deal of wit. It appeared that in March, 1845, he had bound himself by treaty to Véron and de Girardin to supply their newspapers exclusively, saving only the completion of some engagements to other newspapers. During five years he was to furnish nine volumes to each newspaper, which made a total of ninety volumes for the five years. Each volume was to consist of 6000 lines, and for each he was to receive about £140, equal to £2520 a year, or nearly £13,000 in all. These were handsome terms for one who was supposed to be doing the work by contract. A list of his debts to other journals were included in the treaty to guard against mistakes, and the great storyteller was secured as tightly as legal treaty could do it. All went well until October in the same year, when (scarcely to their surprise) the other parties to the contract saw that various newspapers were announcing a number of new works from the pen of M. Alexandre Dumas. This was

eminently characteristic; he wanted cash, and could not wait "five years" for the slow process of earning it. *Le Soleil* announced "Le Bâtard de Mauléon:" while "Andrea del Sarto," "Amazonc," "Le Guerre des Femmes," "Fabien," were the titles that greeted the deceived editors from the handsome and artistic placards in which French publications of importance are proclaimed. Dumas, when called on to interfere, protested that he was innocent; why, "Amazonc" was an old story that he had sold to Hetzel, the Brussels publisher, who had resold it to the *Siècle*. How could he help that?

But the droll part was to come. He entered into ingenious special pleadings and discussions as to the other works furnished to the newspapers; and the result was that the two editors found not merely that he was supplying everybody of every degree, in defiance of his agreement, but that *they* were actually the only persons he would *not* supply. After many *pourparlers*, and they were excessively indulgent to him, he offered Véron to give him "La Dame de Montsoreau," a long serial. But this used to arrive in scraps, now from the isle of Monte Christo, now from St. Germain, at the wildest hours and seasons, generally as they were going to press, so that he threw the office, as the advocate said, into a state of "continual perturbation."

Four volumes ought to have been delivered in MS. on the 1st of July, 1845, but nothing had been sent in, and by September only one was completed. When summoned by a formal notification of the court to complete his contract, he set to work to slaughter all his characters wholesale, and brought the story to an abrupt conclusion. The arrears of 1845 he never attempted to clear off, and for 1846 he supplied nothing, while he had, of course, received most of the money in advance!

His treatment of the *Presse* was ludicrous. He had begun the clever tale of "Joseph Balsamo," and was making it, what it remains now, a story of powerful interest, when the tempting proposal of the Spanish journey was made. The readers had ended a chapter with the sentence: "After this there was little left for the young man except to die. He closed his eyes and sank upon the ground,"—and there, as the advocate said pleasantly, was he left, for six months, no one knowing what was to come next; while M. Dumas was shooting lions and tigers, exhibiting himself to the natives, and displaying the order of Nitchan on his chest, where there was still *a little room left for it*. What did he care if his unfortunate countrymen at home were afflicted with a double famine—a dearth of corn and of *his* romances!

Such was the indictment. When the court met again, it was known that Alexander intended stating his own case, and the crush was overpowering. He spoke with fluency and vehemence, received every indulgence (or "rope enough," as it might be called), and furnished some hours of delightful entertainment. The charm lay in the fact of his being so thoroughly genuine—in there being no affectation in his exhibition of vanity. He began by saying that here was no encounter of man to man, but a "duel of honour against honour." He said, with scorn, that he regretted much to see there a Véron or a de Girardin; he was obliged to *fire his pistol in the air*. His defence was sophistical, and scarcely intelligible; indeed, by what was said in reply, would seem to have been full of untrue statements. He described in a dramatic style all his communications with Véron. "My dear Dumas, we want something bright and sparkling, to be supplied in eight days." "O, that gives us *plenty of time*, I answered." A volume of his writing, he explained to the court, consisted of 135 folios, and 6000 lines. He brought this exact number of pages to Véron, numbered them from 1 to 135, to show his "loyalty," and gravely engaged that they should be filled with "copy" within the time. Indeed, it is amusing to see him dealing with "lines," his favourite measure, as

though it were so many yards or ounces. Much amusement was caused as the great *exploiteur* explained that "Yes" and "No," "Damnation!" and such words were each to have a line for itself, and be paid for accordingly. The whole "contract" was for 30,000 lines. This sounded like a trade transaction, and justified Jacquot's phrase, "*Mercantilisme littéraire*." The swarthy novelist proceeded with his animated and rambling speech, now amusing, now stupefying his audience. "Gentlemen, it was in this way that I went to Spain, &c.," explaining his sudden departure and failure to keep his engagements in this airy fashion:—"I had written some 15,800 lines"—we should note this minute accuracy,—“or eight volumes, in eighteen months, and I was tired. You must know that *I write my books myself*;" which recalls "*Bergeret lui-même*" of the Commune,—“but I have a very intelligent and devoted collaborateur. Still I do a vast deal of work. No one knows this better than M. de Girardin, for he was with me on the very morning of my departure, and had *Mille. Brohan* with him in his carriage." Here murmurs broke out among the audience. "I say this in all *honour*, gentlemen," resumed the novelist gravely; "in honour. For we *all* know that an actress *may* pass two or three hours in a *coupé* with M. de Girardin, or with any one else." This strange

amende was passed over. He went on to say that he was ill, and read a letter from Pasquier, the Duke of Montpensier's physician, who was "above suspicion," as well as another from his *ordinary* doctor, who said that he had received one from Dumas, in which he complained of his "bowels, asking me to go and see you, to tell you, what I have told you twenty times, that you are doing the work of a dray-horse." He then recounted his travels, which have been recounted before, explaining how he had been honoured and decorated. "I went to Tunis, whose prince, though a native, is not a savage. He was away in France, but in his absence I received a brilliant and hospitable reception from his brother, who welcomed me *as if I was an envoy*"—which he was no doubt led to believe Dumas was,—and fixed on my breast the decoration of *the Nitchan*. I collected the most precious documents, which in four days I shall place in the office of the court, in the shape of a volume written in my own hand."* It was here, too, that he made the declaration we have already quoted as to the Spanish order conferred, not only as a literary distinction, but on "me, Alexander Dumas, Marquis de la Pailleterie—the friend of the Duke of Mont-

* This was no doubt the lively trifle entitled "*Le Veloce*," but which had not, of course, the least value as an official document.

pensier," and which produced divers "sensations" in court.

It was delightful to hear him dealing with figures and "lines," boasting grandly of his deep engagements. "I was pledged for 6,000 lines to Cadot, 4,800 to Bethune, 60,000 to the *Siècle*, 24,000 to *La Commerce*." "The Academicians are forty. Let them promise to supply you with forty volumes in a year. They will break down. I have done what man has never done or never will do." It was amusing to hear him translating everything into trade figures, speaking of a certain amount as equal to "*half a great tragedienne*." But he excited "signs of astonishment" in court when he declared bluntly, "that though he was in advance of the *Presse*, he owed them not money but *goods*." As to the works which he had supplied to other journals, there was "Fabien," a poor thing, which in fact, so tormented him with its faults and imperfections, that one day he took it deliberately, flung it on the fire, and burnt it. Unfortunately, the counsel on the other side was able to "rectify" this statement in a very serious way, by stating that the work was not M. Dumas's, but his clever son's; and that it might have been burnt, but had risen from its ashes again, and, strange to say, had been published in four volumes only a short time before. It

certainly did not bear the name of "Fabien," but that of "Aventures de Quatre Femmes et d'un Perroquet." This "rectification" the gréat man did not impugn. More pleasant was it to hear him explaining gloriously the grandeur of his system for supplying the newspapers with copy from St. Germain. "I had three horses always ready, three men, and often a *special train*."

After three days of this delightful entertainment, the court came to give judgment. It decreed that within one month he must resume his interrupted feuilleton and "Joseph Balsamo," and for every day's delay he must pay a penalty of four pounds. Should the penalties reach twelve pounds, he was to be sent to prison for a year, and for every successive failure was to be dealt with in similar fashion. He was also to pay to each of the newspapers a fine of 120*l*. This was scarcely as severe a sentence as might have been expected, but the court could not lean heavily on so entertaining a defendant.

Véron, a man of extraordinary sagacity in "affaires," always treated him with good-humoured contempt. Dumas says that he had a great deal of "*esprit*," a fact, adds Dumas with *esprit* himself, that could never have been denied, had Véron not the ill luck to have been a millionaire. "We were never intimate, Véron and I," says our author, six years after the law-suit,

“and I believe he *never thought much of my talents*. When he was director of the *Revue du Paris*, he never asked me for a single article.” Alexander then touches lightly on the law-suit. “After the decision they put an end to the treaty *in a friendly way*, when I was bound to furnish him with twenty volumes, and owed him 6,000 francs. It was settled that I should give him 12,000 lines for this debt. But he soon after disposed of the newspaper. For the first journal *he founds, Véron has the right of drawing on me for twelve thousand lines at twelve days’ sight; on the thirteenth his draft will be honoured!*” This was in the key of his speech to the court; but it is quite evident that he was more mortified at Véron’s indifference as to the balance that was waiting for him in the bank, than if he had acted the part of a harsh creditor.* Not to have found substantial recognition in the many volumes of the amusing “*Bourgeois de Paris*” amounted to a slight.†

* “But,” he goes on, “people will say, if Véron has wit, who writes his articles, who wrote his memoirs? Another would say, He never wrote them at all—it was Malitourne. But it is enough for me to see his name attached. Still people scream out at me and laugh at me if I say that he has wit. They repeat, you say so because you owe him twelve thousand lines.” There is a great deal of malice under all this.

† No man was ever more familiar with courts of law; and, it must be said, he was almost always before them on some failure of agreement in his engagements. Thus, in 1835, he received a sum of 260*l.* from a Madame Poisson, on condition of delivering two five-act dramas—one

within a few weeks, the other within six months—under fines for the delay. A manager had engaged to produce them within sixty-five days after their being placed in his hands. The first piece was sent in due time by Dumas, and given to the manager; the second was not. Dumas, then on his travels, wrote home that after being nearly lost in a storm, and arrested by the soldiers of the Pope, he hoped to be in Paris within a short time. The proprietors of the pieces brought an action against the manager, demanding 600*l.* damages. He transferred the blame to Dumas, who had promised to alter the conclusion of the first piece. In both instances Dumas was evidently the cause of the failure; but the conclusion of the case is not reported, so it was probably settled. In the following year he sold four of his plays—"Henri III." and "Christine," "Darlington" and "Tower of Nesle," to Barba, the bookseller, only reserving a right of including two pieces in a collected edition of his works. He inserted all four, and had to pay 120*l.* damages. In 1838, he had failed to place his "Captain Paul," and after many failures, disposed of it to an obscure theatre called the Panthéon. Great expense had been gone to, when suddenly, on the Saturday previous to the performance, another house, called the Bobino, announced the same play. No redress could be obtained.

CHAPTER XI.

THÉÂTRE HISTORIQUE.

1847.

THOUGH the Théâtre Français was so constant, and his plays were in demand, it seemed as though he was losing his hold upon the stage. This failure he now attributed to cabals and prejudice of persons behind the scenes, who were determined not to give him a fair chance. The disloyal proceedings of which he accused the artistes of the Théâtre Français, might seem to have fairly closed the doors of that establishment to him for ever. When, therefore, the dazzling successes of his great romances in 1845-6 had raised him to the rank of a potentate, always Eastern in the magnificence of his ideas, it was natural that the idea of a noble theatre secured from the interference of intrigues and enemies, where *his* genius and ideas should enjoy full play to regenerate the community, should have been one of the gorgeous visions that floated before his eyes.

The Duke of Orleans, his *second* royal protector, was now lost to him, and Fortune seemed slow in supplying his place. One evening, however, on the first representation of his "Mousquetaires" at the Ambigu Comique (October 27th, 1845), our author was seated in a box exactly opposite another in which was his Royal Highness the Duke of Montpensier. "I am very different," he says, "from my brethren, who, on such occasions, keep skulking about the passages and the places behind the scenes; whereas I confront either applause or hissing with such an unruffled calm that I have often received a spectator in my box who left me without suspecting he had been with the actual author of the piece." *

He had never exchanged a word with the Duke, but he amused himself with watching the various emotions that passed over the royal countenance. That face called up all the old benevolence shown to him by the defunct Duke of Orleans, and the emotions that this occasioned caused the spectators to smile. But as all the world knows, he says, there are a strange class of men, who are "*eunuchs in heart*." Of a sudden he saw the Prince turn pale. The actor who played Athos, and was to "receive the splash of blood on his face that trickled through

* "Imp. de Voy. de Paris à Cadix," p. 7.

the scaffold at the execution of Charles I.," had daubed his cheek too clumsily. Dumas rushed from his box, flew to Dr. Pasquier, who was in attendance on the Prince, and bade him assure his Highness that on the next night all this "scaffold business" should be cut out. He says the result may be imagined, for "there exists between all *choice* natures a certain instinctive relation." The Prince sent for him, though Alexander was only "in a morning-coat and black tie." A week later the young Prince, who was no doubt flattered by being chosen patron to so well-known a character, received him at Vincennes. He was a weak youth, and it was at this time that Dumas conceived the idea of carrying out the scheme so long in his head, of founding a new theatre on a scale of vast magnificence, where his own works were to be performed. He quite dazzled the young Prince, obtained a promise of a patent to be secured by his influence, and was allowed to name it "The Montpensier Theatre." He then cleverly transferred his patent to Hostein—it was said for 4,000*l*.*—who had been at the Ambigu as director. A company was formed, and the Hotel Foulon, on the Boulevard du Temple, was purchased for 24,000*l*., levelled, and a magnificent theatre raised at a cost of over 30,000*l*.

The architects Dreux and Séchan designed it on a new principle—making it a long oval, broad instead of deep, and laying out all the lines of boxes and galleries parallel to the stage, instead of following the usual horse-shoe pattern. This system has been found not to answer. The decorations were lavish and of the most artistic kind; the plafond was painted with allegorical figures, and there was a hemicycle of famous poets and actors. He wished the façade to convey, he says, that it was a European theatre, where not only France would reign, but all Europe would come like a vassal to do homage with her humble wares.

But when the shrewd old King came to hear of this arrangement, he sent for his son, and warned him: "If you wish," he said, "indulge yourself in the whim of having a theatre; but recollect the Royal Family has not the privilege of being *bankrupt*." He succeeded in alarming the young man, who, to Alexander's mortification, drew back, and refused to allow his name to be given to the theatre. It had, therefore, to be changed to that of "Théâtre Historique." Alexander was always destined to be thus mortified.

He had returned from abroad, as we have seen, at the close of the year 1846, in time for the opening of the theatre, and the completion of his "Castle."

On the 21st. of February, 1847, the théâtre was opened, and ten thousand people were collected round the doors to see the company go in, gaze at the statues of Hamlet and Ophelia, and the painted hemicycle crowded with poets and dramatists. Theophile Gautier, always a friendly critic to Dumas,* was present. Every one was delighted with the effect of the interior—the noble oval plafond, the broad *balcony*,—then a novelty—the crimson and gold curtain, “the richest in the world.” At half-past six o’clock the Duke of Montpensier arrived with his suite, and the play, which was “*La Reine Margot*,” began. It was the romance of the name which the faithful Maquet had duly cut up into fifteen tableaux. There was little more to be done, as the spirited dialogue was there ready to hand. This piece unfolded itself slowly during *nine hours*, and the last tableau was not set until three in the morning.† The Duke and the audience are reported to have sat it all out with constancy. Thus Alexander was to be always one of the “dazzling wonders” of his day.

* It is amusing to watch the struggle between this partiality and his nice critical sense; though he generally takes care to let it be seen that it is a concession to friendship.—*Vide* his “*Histoire de l’Art Dramatique*.”

† “We must ask the indulgence of the reader,” wrote Gautier the next day; “without being like good old Homer, we are likely enough to be found nodding as we write, and dropping our pen in the middle of a sentence. We did not get to bed until broad daylight.”

It was followed by "Le Chevalier de Maison Rouge," a stirring and brilliant series of scenes during the Revolution. Any one who has seen one of these spectacular Dumas dramas, will own to the charm of romance, and of the interest of true story-telling, being present. In the hands of French actors, who are rarely vulgar on the stage, and who generally contrive to elevate the parts entrusted to them, they have a fascination which it is vain to struggle against. This piece contained the famous chorus of Girondins, "Mourir pour la Patrie," which was to do duty within a year on "the boards" of real life. It was followed by "Hamlet" and other pieces. It was remarked with surprise that the name of Maquet was coupled with his own on the bills, though he had sworn that his own name should always stand alone. But after the *exposé* by De Mirecourt, Maquet had insisted that, in plays at least, his share should be acknowledged. Even after this sacrifice was to come a fresh mortification, which showed that, in spite of all these grand titles to magnificence, irreverence was now the feeling in the public mind. On the boards of the Vaudeville was to be seen a new piece, called "Les Collaborateurs," by one Jousserandot, in which Dumas was brought on as distinctly as Foote brought on George Faulkner. Every one recognised the "literary contractor," who had

a number of young men working under his direction, and who put his name to plays and novels of which he had not written a line. Alexander was, however, by this time pretty well accustomed to squibs of all kinds. Volumes might be filled with the pamphlets, "Plutarches drolatiques," and verses that streamed forth since his unlucky visit to Spain. Never, indeed, in his whole life had such a storm of ridicule been poured upon his head. Repudiated as a charlatan by the Ministry, spoken of with contempt in the Chamber, brought on the stage, laughed at in court,—all this was surely enough to have cooled down his extravagance, and to have at least induced him to remain quiet. But he was incurable. What follows will scarcely be credited. On the 1st of May was the King's fête-day, when the various officers and functionaries presented themselves at the Louvre to pay their compliments. In the grand gallery was seen strutting along a citizen in the dress of a commandant, and whose appearance excited astonishment and merriment. He was at once recognised as Dumas. His chest, likened to the window of a jeweller's shop in the Palais Royal, was all covered over with cheap foreign decorations and coloured ribbons. There were five crosses, four decorations, and three collars. These had been given to him at Tunis, Naples, &c. No

marshal of France who had seen service could exhibit such a glittering chest. No wonder that Charles Nodier—a friend—could not resist saying, “*You negroes* always set a great value on these toys,”—a speech that was, of course, put in the papers. But this ridicule had, of course, no effect.

We can, however, have more sympathy with him in his experience of the neglect of princes. For the Duke of Orleans he had certainly shown grief, and to the Duke of Montpensier, when exiled in 1848, he made a public profession of gratitude that entailed some risk. He wrote letters in the papers, proclaiming his devotion, and had issued a protest against the law which exiled the royal family. Later, he arranged a little attention, which, if rather theatrical, was delicate and well meant. The Duke had his box at the theatre, for which he duly subscribed: but after his exile, as it became “vacant,” Dumas went to the director and engaged it himself. For a whole year it remained unlet, and on the first night of a new piece was duly lit up as though the Duke was expected. Nay, for such a night, a letter was duly forwarded to Spain, and the ticket enclosed. After a year had passed, the Prince’s secretary found himself in Paris, and came to ask Dumas, had *he* his old *entrées*? The latter bade him, if he had kept his key, make use of it. “For.

my dear friend, revolutions may change Governments, but can do nothing to locks. By the way, did the Prince receive his box-tickets regularly?"

"To be sure he did," was the answer.

"And what did he say?"

"Why he burst out laughing, and said, 'Just like that *Merryandrew Dumas!*'"

"Odd," answered Dumas. "I should have been more inclined to cry." He then sat down and wrote to the director: "My dear Hostein, after to-morrow, you can dispose of the Duke of Montpensier's box. I find that the yearly rent of a box is paying too high a price for the pleasure of making a prince laugh." * This, if not unduly embellished, was ungracious, though at the same time the sending the tickets did seem to verge on farce.

* His dedication of "Le Veloce" to the Prince (the book is dated 1849, the year after the revolution) is on record. It runs, "My lord—I did not think of dedicating this book to you when you were in Paris. Let me repair this forgetfulness to-day, when you are in exile." This contrasts favourably with the mortifying remark of the Prince. In his *Memoires d'un Journaliste* De Villemessant mentions a curious story, which shows that he clung to the hope of something from the family to the last. See Series i. p. 143.

CHAPTER XII.

THE REVOLUTION.

1848.

THIS was certainly the most brilliant period of his life; never was he so talked about and followed. But his reign was to be a very short one.

The Revolution of 1848, though it may have brought him some satisfaction in the downfall of his old patron, was a serious interruption for a man with a theatre, and a fairy palace,—to support which an income of at least eight thousand a year was necessary. The shock of Revolution is fatal to undertakings of all kinds, owing to the uncertainty of all things. With his usual good fortune, his chant "*Mourir pour la Patrie*," sung in the "*Chevalier de Maison Rouge*," had seized on the public mind, and was roared by coarse throats in every quarter of the city. Alexander, indeed, flattered himself that this strain had contributed materially to the success of the struggle. With what seemed a certain chivalry, he

stood up for the exiled family, or rather for the Duke of Montpensier, to whom, on March 4th, seven days after the Revolution of February, in the middle of the boiling excitement and republican effervescence in all the streets, he addressed the following letter, published in the *Presse* :—

“TO MY LORD THE DUKE OF MONTPENSIER,—If I knew where to find your Royal Highness, I would in person hurry to offer the expression of my sorrow for the great calamity that has come upon your family.

“I can never forget that during three years, in spite of politics, and even against the wishes of the King, you have received me and treated me almost as a friend. Of this title of friend, my lord, I used to boast when you were at the Palace; now that you have left France, I claim it.”

As he himself says, there was some boldness, if not danger, in publishing such sentiments. This danger Dumas was not the one to court, unless for substantial reasons. It might seem not a little hard that the labour of twenty years—the prostration, the self-abasement to the King, whom he had threatened with a “hot iron—” should all be lost. Louis Philippe was played out; but the Duke had a future, at least in Spain. This is merely speculation, but it is a probable solution enough.

This step, however, brought its inconveniences. As he was returning from a fête on the following day, in the costume of Commandant of the National Guard of St. Germain, he heard angry murmurs behind him, and turning round perceived a man leading a band of some fifty men. The man came up to him. "So it is you, Citizen Alexander Dumas, who addresses Montpensier as 'my lord'?" "Sir," I said with the greatest politeness, "I always make it a practice of calling an exile 'my lord,' a bad habit no doubt; but such as it is, it has fastened on me." "Then take this for your pains," said the other, presenting a pistol. "A young man, whom I did not know, M. Emile Mayer, and who lives at present at No. 17, Rue de Buffant, knocked up the pistol, which went off in the air. I had half drawn my sword from the scabbard, intending to pass it through the man's body; but I thought the punishment idle, so I went home. This took place in broad daylight, before some two hundred persons. It cannot be denied." Yet it *was* denied, and another version circulated. He wished, they said, to harangue the mob in his gallant uniform, and was hooted. "Will you hold your tongue? You have still got *that butt-end of Montpensier's cigar in your mouth.*"* He would not be listened to.

He then bought a share in the *Liberté*, at a moment

* Jacquot, "Les Contemporains."

when it was selling, "he says," only 12,000 or 13,000 copies. "I joined it; in two months it had reached 80,000 copies." He wished to insert a protest against the law exiling the Orleans princes, but the editor refused. It was finally published in *La Commerce*. He also pleaded for Prince Napoleon. So he left the *Liberté*, where, again, the story ran, he wished to work up comic politics, playing tricks with his readers as he had done in his romances, but the times were too serious for tricks. "He seemed," says Jacquot, "like a mountebank doing his tricks at a funeral," and the paper expired shortly after. Still he could not restrain his taste for "selling canards," and he commenced a journal of his own, *Le Mois*, "an historical *résumé* of everything that happens from day to day, and hour to hour, entirely edited by Alexander Dumas." It exhibited this motto—

"GOD DICTATES AND I WRITE!"*

This ran for a few numbers, and expired. A little later he offered himself as a candidate for the Assembly. Then he harangued in the clubs. He told them that he was a workman, a workman of *thought*. "Every day of my life I am the means of supplying bread to hundreds of *other* workmen, *my brothers*—compositors,

* There is yet another newspaper of his, *La France Nouvelle*.

pressmen, binders, sewers, folders, who work at my newspapers and books." But the argument had no effect, and he was treated as uncereemoniously as before. He would seem to have "stood" for Auxerre. He was certainly entitled to do so, "for when a man has passed twenty years of his life in investigating the history of the nations, going through Herodotus to Michelet—in studying their religious struggles from Peter de Valdo down to the Abbé Châtel, in following the changes of empires from Cæsar to Napoleon," as *he* had, he had as fair a claim to be a deputy as "Albert the workman," or any one else. He went to Auxerre, but was detained on the road by the breaking down of his carriage. A crowd of three thousand persons, who had been waiting for him, were in very ill humour, and one man hissed him. "Sir," said Dumas, turning, "I allow you to hiss my works if you like, but not myself. Your name and address, if you please." This silenced the interrupter. He was instantly challenged as to his relations with the Duke of Orleans. He was delighted at this opening. "Thank you," he cried, "for the question. In five minutes, mark, you will all be crying." He then started off in a rapturous panegyric on the Duke, the love the country bore him, his miserable end, etc.; and at the end of the five minutes they were all weeping, rushing forward to

embrace him, shaking him by the hand, etc. But still they declined to elect him, because he did not belong to the district.* He tried St. Germain, the place which he had "invented," or almost created : it would not have him. Going to address a crowd in the country, to propitiate them, he thought he would put on all his decorations. A man screamed out, "There's a Republican with a fine lot of crosses !" "Heaven knows," he answered, "if I carry these things 'tis not for vanity, I swear to you ; but purely and simply from not wishing to disoblige the parties that gave them. Where's the good of annoying these poor kings." He then pulled a sealed packet out of his pocket. "Even this morning," he went on, "they have sent me another. Exactly. This is from the King of Holland. Now why should I annoy that poor King of Holland ?"† Thus unsuccessful in politics and journalism, he returned once more to his plays.

At his theatre he determined on a novel experiment—viz., the spreading his "*Monte Christo*" over two nights in succession. This was a bold scheme, indeed. Théophile Gautier described agreeably the new association which this system might lead to. "During

*-See "*Le Monte Christo*," No. 18.

† To the good Christina of Spain he had sent the MS. of his *Mlle. de Bellefleur*, and received in return the order of Isabella the Catholic.

the first evening you were reserved with your neighbours; but on the second greetings were interchanged, and a sort of intimacy began to spring up. You began to make your arrangements; from being a mere spectator you became an inhabitant. Visits were returned; cards were left with the box-openers. In the passages you heard such remarks as the following:—
'Seen Madam X——?' 'No; I don't know her address.' 'O, she lives on the first story, No. 23.' 'Does she see people?' 'O dear, yes; she never goes out, and receives from the third to the fifth act.'”*

But these were disastrous days for theatres, and this enterprise, of the newest and most costly sort, was least likely of any to succeed. The “*Historique*” was soon in difficulties, and presently on the verge of ruin. Dumas, who had a heavy stake in the concern, had now to mortgage his castle of Monte Christo to its full value. He was, in fact, struggling to surmount the difficulties which his numerous extravagances must have entailed. The old absurd element, however, was never to fail him.

The lively comedies—or rather farces—in connection with his contributions to the newspapers were not yet concluded. A little later, towards the close of

* *Histoire de l'Art Dramatique.*

1849, everyone was devouring the "Memoirs of the Vicomte de Bragelonne," which he was supplying as a feuilleton to the editor of the *Siècle*. Suddenly Porthos ~~was~~ "killed off" in rather an abrupt style; and immediately after the editor was horrified to find that no more copy was sent in. He despatched a special messenger to the "great man," demanding a supply, and was aghast to learn that he had gone to Villers-Cotterets, his native place. The next post brought a letter of explanation from Dumas, which furnishes a delightful bit of farce or of that exquisite *blague* with which the author befooled himself and others. He had gone away because the grief he felt at having to *destroy Porthos* had quite unmanned him!

That "dear Porthos, his good son, whom he had made so grand, so noble, he had been obliged to destroy, owing to the necessities of the feuilleton," and he must remain away *eight days to mourn*. What are we to think of the man that could write such stuff seriously, or of the editor who could not only accept it but offer it to the readers of his journal? Alexander turning from this sad subject, was glad to tell that he had been received in the most handsome manner by the Commandant of the National Guard at Villers-Cotterets, who had sympathised with his sorrow, and serenaded him several times

to soothe him. The population had not been behind hand, and had sympathised with both him and the Commandant, while the henchman Maquet, who had attended him down, had pronounced a sort of funeral oration over the defunct Porthos, "whose uncle he was." It is conceivable enough that the writer of the letter was childish enough to have written such nonsense, but what can be thought of the tolerant community that could purchase or read the nonsense? All that could be said was "that it was the great farçeur all over."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE "MOUSQUETAIRE."

1850—1859.

THE Théâtre Historique, after swallowing up vast sums of money,—he places his own loss at 8,000*l.*, but it must have cost him far more,—was at last, in 1850, to close its doors. The speculation had been a ruinous failure, and Dumas, whose affairs were now hopelessly involved through the extravagant character of his schemes, began to think of retiring for a while from Paris. His friend, Victor Hugo, had been exiled, and Dumas adroitly contrived to have it understood that he, too, was leaving, on account of sharing his friend's political opinions.

But he had received a shock in the unkind behaviour of his faithful Maquet. This valuable journeyman had long shown patience, with an humble, though not sufficiently remunerated, devotion to his patron. As is usual in such cases, his labours had been the last to be considered, and now, when all the world was

pressing claims, he came with one for a sum of nearly 3000*l*. He was not to be denied, and required a settlement to be made at once. He knew, as well as the "grand homme" himself, that such a sum was not to be forthcoming from that well-drained purse. He insisted that his own name, too long suppressed, should henceforth appear on the title-page of all works in which he had had a share. Dumas struggled hard to avoid this humiliation. But the other was inflexible, and a deed was signed in due form by which the acknowledgment was made. By this fatal step the firm of "Dumas & Co." was broken up, and it must be said the enchanter lost his wand. No one could understand how were found and carried out those dazzling dreams, those brilliant tales of adventure, with which the brain of the magician teemed, but which he was too engrossed or too spiritual to undertake the drudgery of putting into vulgar concrete shape. His readers now found the dullest stuff set before them,—the poor and tedious attempts of some tyro, to which the great man would set his name, or, when the circumstances did not admit of such a step, which would be simply "edited" by him. The only occasions on which his individuality was revealed was in his "talks," or *Causeries*, when his vanity and delight in talking about himself furnished

him with a certain garrulous spirit. But all this was a great change from the old days.

In 1850 he retired to Brussels. It was said, indeed, that one of his motives for visiting that city was the certainty of finding fresh workmen there for his factory. There were some clever young French writers—refugees—who would be glad to dine at his table, listen to his jokes, dip into his purse occasionally, and furnish abundant “copy.”* The first result of this new “collaboration” was a story called “Isaac Laquedam,” which was furnished to the *Constitutionnel*, one of the journals with whom he, not so long before, had been at open war in the courts. This work was issued with a great flourish, but only a few chapters were destined to appear. It opened with some of the author’s favourite profanity, which the editor found rather too strong, even for the readers of the *Constitutionnel*, and summarily suppressed.

He remained in Brussels for three years, and in 1853 returned to Paris with another of his magnificent schemes. This was the founding of a grand journal, in which his individuality was to be revealed, and which was, in fact, to be *all* Dumas—Dumas storytelling and Dumas talking and “chatting,” and as some added, Dumas “twaddling” and “humbugging.” An agent

* De Mirecourt, “Les Contemporains.”

was found for the scheme, which was loudly puffed and heralded, and in due time "LE MOUSQUETAIRE" made its appearance. He now entirely revelled in vanity, and displayed himself in the most ridiculous attitudes before the wondering and laughing audience of Paris. At first the *Muosquetaire* was an extraordinary success. Its offices were at the Maison Dorée; its staff the largest and most heterogeneous ever known. People walked in as into a café; the first comer offered his services, and was accepted. "All Paris," says De Villemessant, "was editor at a fixed salary." "What will you allow me?" would ask the new hand. "Whatever you like, my boy," replied the great man. Every one who had a protégé, sent him to Dumas, who accepted them all. A young writer named Alfred Asseline met him on the racecourse, where the great man "conduisait Mademoiselle Isabelle Constant," an actress at the Ambigu. Alexander was charmed to see his friend, insisted on their dining together that evening at Philippe's to discuss the new project, and in which he desired that Asseline should assist him. The dinner was handsome, and the host inexhaustible in dazzling plans and resources. After dinner he pulled out of his pocket a couple of bank notes for forty pounds each. "You see," he said, "*I have got money*, and we might start this

very week." The other hinted that the two notes could not carry them very far. Dumas explained that he had already made a contract with one Brière, in the Rue Ste. Anne, who for a sum of about six pounds a day was to furnish paper and print for the journal. They had therefore money enough to cover some fifteen days, and by that time the journal would be established. They would start with six thousand copies at a penny each. "We shall be rich at once," he exclaimed enthusiastically. "To-morrow I shall get an article from Gautier, and give him five and twenty pounds. I myself will furnish 'a chat' every day for the first page. There will be then three columns for my memoirs, a feuilleton of a story which is all ready, and also by me. You will do the rest. Lots of young fellows will come knocking at our doors,—we must encourage rising talent, sir!"

Such was the brilliant programme; perhaps the hundredth brilliant programme he had set before those whose aid he wished to secure. He went on—

"By the way, before you go we must understand one thing—I mean you to be handsomely paid. You must have fifty pounds a month; and if you should wish to have a month's pay in advance, now don't scruple to ask us."

The young fellow was completely dazzled. The enchanter could conjure with words as effectually as another man could with gold and silver. At this time he was living in a little *entresol* at the Hotel Louvois, Place Louvois, where friends and acquaintances found him working away in his shirt sleeves, dirty, careless of his dress, yet always good-humoured and ready for a chat.

The paper was sold at all the cafés, and read everywhere. Much amusement was caused by the notice which he placed in its first column: "The journal does not receive advertisements of theatres or books. It pays for its stalls and buys its books." But in spite of this Spartan resolution the young critic confesses there were serious reasons why it could not be upheld. The books poured in all the same, and as there was soon not a farthing to be had at the treasury to purchase a ticket, the young critic had to ask for his admission, as other critics did. In fact, money was always wanting. Though the receipts were usually twenty pounds a day, the spendthrift editor had always some Jew to soothe, some distress to relieve, or some little want of his own to satisfy. Printers and paper-makers were left unpaid.

The unhappy treasurer, a gardener whom he had brought in from Monte Christo, and who could get no

salary, was at his wits' end. Nothing was paid. The office, a miserable room at fifty pounds a year, garnished with two or three chairs, was besieged by creditors. The young contributors whom he had dazzled with the fifty pounds a month, and if "they should desire a month's payment in advance," etc., began to treat the matter as a good joke. They were consoled by the excellent company that visited the little office. Thither came Meyerbeer, Brohan the actress, Madame de Girardin, Henri Rochefort, and others. Above all there was the incomparable Alexander himself, ever cheerful, ever hopeful, and always ready to share the stray pieces he was able to keep in his pocket, with his young assistants.

This could not last long. It must be said that he worked hard in this enterprise, but he found, as most eminent writers do, that the least profitable mode of furnishing their work to the public is to be the chief contributor to their own journal. They have to be their own paymaster. It seemed far better to have any one else to act in that capacity.

The whole was an extraordinary scene of waste and disorder; yet it was a "good property," and might have been made a splendid one under respectable management. Some friends proposed to introduce

order and system by joining the venture, among whom was De Villemessant, and this good-natured proposal was really intended in the interest of the great man himself. He declined it on grounds that were admirably characteristic. "My dearest comrade, what you and that heart of gold, Millaud, have proposed is admirable, and I have no doubt would succeed. But the dream of my whole life has been to have a journal of my own, entirely my own. This object I have now attained, and I calculate that the very least it can bring me in will be a million a year (£40,000). I have not yet withdrawn a half-penny from the receipts for my articles, a sum which at forty sous the line, by this time represents two hundred thousand francs (£8000), earned since starting the paper, a sum which I shall leave to increase quietly in stock, so that in a month or so I can have four or five hundred thousand francs at once. Under these circumstances you will see that I am not in need of money or of a manager. The *Mousquetaire* is a gold mine, and I mean to work it all myself. *Au revoir*, my dear friends, I grieve that I have only two hands with which to squeeze your four."

This letter, delightfully significant of his whole character, might almost seem to be taken from a work of fiction, and to have been from the pen of Micawber,

who was quite as sanguine in pecuniary matters. Within a very short time after these golden dreams the paper was extinct.

"There is to be seen," says M. De Villemessant, the lively editor of the *Figaro*, "walking about Paris, a little man scarcely taller than M. Thiers, to whose figure disease has given so singular a shape that one would think it had been moulded in a French horn." This was Boulé, a well-known character, whom all "gentlemen of letters" knew very well. When the "Mousquetaire" was beginning to languish, this person went to Dumas and proposed taking over the speculation. He offered him a hundred francs a day, which was at the rate of nearly fifteen hundred pounds a year. "Here," he said, "is a little cheque book full of those little tinted leaves you are so fond of. Every morning you have only to write your name at the foot of one, send it into the office, and there you touch your four pounds!" Dumas's face beamed with delight. "And supposing some day I should want three or four hundred francs?" "Well, all you have to do is to send in three or four of your cheques; nothing more simple." The plan was agreed to on both sides. The book of cheques lay on Alexander's desk, a delightful and ready resource. Did a creditor call?—"cric, crac!"—a few

slips of paper torn out, and he was paid. A poor woman was about to be turned into the street for rent unpaid; a few more slips torn out and she was relieved. By the end of a week there was nothing left but the cover. On Boulé's refusing to make further advances Alexander took an indignant tone. He went, as it were, on strike. "The moment you don't pay me I stop my articles," he cried. And he seemed to be under the delusion that the publisher owed him large sums.

The latter having lost so much money only thought of recovering it by the aid of the name of the great man, who had now ceased to contribute. His signature was placed at the foot of the most extraordinary articles. Couturier, the "page arranger," became the editor, and with a pair of scissors cut out of all sorts of journals anything that would fill the columns. Sometimes he would preface them with a few lines, following the practice of the great master himself. "The following exciting account of an assassination that took place yesterday I take from my friend," etc. Any young amateur who called timorously with a contribution was confounded at finding it eagerly accepted, —was told that it would appear that very evening. Strange to say "Ce jobard de public" was a long time before it perceived any difference; a doubtful compli-

ment, as accepted either by the public or the writer. It shows, however, the magic power of his name, like that of Jean Maria Farina, so often affixed to bottles of execrable stuff.

Some of the revelations to which he treated the world in his "talks" were truly ludicrous. He told of his boots, shirts, hats, dogs, cats, birds. As was happily said, "He even undressed himself in the public streets," not merely without shame, but with the apparent consciousness that he was exhibiting himself in the most decent and attractive manner. He told everything about himself—his life, manners, habits, meals—with a grave and simpering dignity that was highly amusing. One night he said he had been at a party at Duke Decazes'. He was sitting on a sofa next Victor Hugo, when Lord and Lady Palmerston came up. The son of the host asked them to move a little so as to leave room between them for Lady Palmerston. "Milady," said his lordship, "will you look at your watch. What is the hour now?" "Thirty-five minutes past ten," replied milady. "Well, milady, never forget the fact, that at thirty-five minutes past ten on this day you have had the honour of sitting between the two greatest geniuses of your time!" This was merely ludicrous. But it was into this journal that he dragged details that con-

cerned his son and himself, to the infinite annoyance of the former.

The *Mousquetaire*, however, notwithstanding this *sauce piquante*, soon languished, and presently died out. In 1857 he started a new journal on the same model, called the *Monte Christo*, "entirely edited and published by Alexander Dumas *alone*." In this the effrontery of manufacture could not be carried much farther. After a while the average number usually consisted of some free and familiar nonsense, beginning "Dear readers," every sentence of which was a paragraph. Then followed some chapters of his romance, "*Monte Christo*," now ten years old; and a short story, palpably by some other hand, but which the great man signed. By and by, the work of a coadjutor was introduced, signed by the coadjutor himself, and as copy failed, recourse was had to the device of taking extracts, pages long, from De Musset, or some other writer, introducing them with a few lines of his own, and signing the whole ALEXANDER DUMAS.*

In this journal he was publishing the "*Mohi-*

* "One of my readers complains that after I had announced that the whole journal was to be written by myself, I sometimes fill up the last page with an advertisement. I give a very simple answer: to finish exactly at the bottom of the last page I must furnish every week one hundred and fourteen thousand letters. It must be admitted that when

cans de Paris." After it had proceeded for some volumes; it became known, during the year 1858, that the eccentric proprietor had gone off on a tour in Russia. Indemnification; however, of the most gorgeous kind was promised in the shape of travels, observations on the manners and customs of Russia, while the world-wide reputation of the great man was a guarantee that he would penetrate into the most sacredly-preserved circles of rank and royalty. The records of these travels were duly forwarded, but were found to consist of copious extracts from old "*mémoires pour servir*"—collections of anecdotes, familiar anecdotes of the Empress Catherine, the murder of Paul, and the like.* But at last the deputy editor was able to announce that "our illustrious traveller was coming

one has a 'Causerie,' a correspondence, and some eight or ten stories to furnish all at once, it is a little difficult to finish *exactly* with the hundred and fourteen thousandth letter. On the day that I fall short by a couple of hundred letters, we have to fill up with an advertisement. When I give two hundred more, we have to carry them over into another number. Should this strict measurer think that he has not got enough for his money let him 'stop' his paper on the day of an advertisement." The reader will see the cool ingenuity of the great man's, under cover of an unreasonable complaint, thus eluding the real charge, which was that he furnished not advertisements, but little or nothing of what was his own.

* He sent a strange letter from Kazan, addressed to his "*Chers lecteurs*," in which he announced that he was now beyond regular postal communication, so they must expect delays in receiving "copy." But as he had not time to write to *all* his friends he had sent a copy of this letter to the *Sidèle*: to which journal he had also despatched "a dozen letters

home." So, they could give notice that the story of the "Mohicans" would now be resumed, and continued without interruption. Early in 1859, he had returned.

In this year died Madame Dumas, at Florence. But a new enterprise of great brilliance was now to be *exploited*, which was to have the effect of restoring some of his lost prestige, or at least of causing him to be talked about.

on the subject of the French, Roman, and Russian emancipation of slaves. May they have some interest, dear readers, for *you* also. But, as for the account of my travels, *that* belongs exclusively to the *Monte Christo*."

CHAPTER XIV.

DUMAS AND GARIBALDI.

THE year 1860 was to exhibit this singular being to his countrymen in a wholly new character, that of the daring filibuster, sailing up under the Neapolitan guns, defying the King and his advisers, and inspiring the Liberator Garibaldi with some of his most daring plans. Thirty years had passed since he electrified the Parisians with his "capture of the powder" at Soissons, and now, after that long interval, during which he had dazzled the world with prodigies of literary horsemanship, driving half-a-dozen stories together round the circus, building palaces and theatres, and scouring foreign countries, he was to take the field as the friend and fellow-combatant of Garibaldi. The never-flagging vitality of this remarkable man is something to admire; for by a sort of instinct he was determined to keep himself always before the eyes of the public whom he had once so dazzled.

He had met Garibaldi at Milan, in the January of the year 1860, and, it is evident, had so fascinated that leader by his grand style as to be allowed the privilege of writing his memoirs. Dumas had gathered a good deal from his lips, and, besides, received a number of MS. notes which he was to cast into shape. When he left Milan he said to Garibaldi, "Heaven knows when we shall meet again; but give me some little scrap by which I shall be able to get to you." The other wrote him a pass, "I commend to all my friends my illustrious friend, Alexander Dumas.—GARIBALDI." Dumas himself had made a tour in Sicily some time before, had entered into mysterious relations with the Carbonari, and had brought back in the lining of his hat a complete plan for an insurrection.

It was in the month of May, then, 1860, that the yacht of the great Frenchman came into the port of Genoa. It was called the *Emma*, and he says that its appearance produced a sensation that made the French admiral in his man-of-war burst with envy. The *Emma* and its gallant owner were to perform prodigies before its cruising was over. On his arrival he found that Garibaldi had started on his famous Sicilian expedition some three weeks before. Dumas had nothing to do but to sit down and work at the memoirs, "sixteen hours out of the twenty-four, which after all was not

much of a change from his usual habits." But when the news arrived of Garibaldi's entrance into Palermo, he determined to join him. The sea was high, and a gale blowing; the little vessel was driven back several times. The master of the boat insisted on having an authority in writing from the owner on sailing, but M. Dumas overruled all objections, and had the flag run up to the mast-head. They had a stormy voyage, nearly a week long, and at last reached port. On landing he at once sought the general, who uttered a cry of joy when he saw him. "My dear Dumas," he said, "so you failed me; you must come with me to the palace," and throwing his arm round the great storyteller's neck, he led him away to the palace, talking in the most confidential fashion. He insisted on giving Dumas the best apartments in the royal palace, and then the latter established himself to write. Nothing is more characteristic than his theatrical art with which he puts himself forward as one of the heroes of the adventure, counselling, setting off on missions, etc., whereas he was all the while filling the prosaic but lucrative office of correspondent to a Paris newspaper, to whom he was sending home graphic letters. When Garibaldi returned from one of his expeditions, and the people poured out into the streets to meet him, Dumas carried a banner, and was received with enthu-

siasm. He was so carried away by this reception that he wrote, "Blessed be my thirty years of struggle and toil after all ! If France has nothing for her poets but a crown of misery and the sceptre of exile, the foreigner at least offers them the crown of laurel and car of triumph !" It was Hugo and others he modestly says they were honouring in him

In July he started in his yacht on an expedition from Sicily for Corfu. But on the road he was seized with a scruple, Why not stay and see the daring expedition come to an issue ? " A year more far away from France, would be a year more far away from calumny and ill-nature. Saving two or three true hearts who really loved me, nothing called me back to that huge Babylon." He was on his way to Asia, but he suddenly changed his mind. He wrote to the General that the people wanted arms, should he go to France and fetch them ? " Say yes, and I put off my Asian tour, and shall make the campaign with you." He waited for a reply to this offer at a little town in Sicily, whose municipality presented him with the freedom of the city, " the fourth time," he says, " that I had been made a citizen in Sicily." The answer soon arrived. " I expect your dear self, as well as to hear all about your grand scheme of the guns. Come ! yours devotedly." He instantly set sail, and arrived there in

time to witness the battle of Milazzo. The General gave him an order on the Palermo municipality, requiring them to have a draft of four thousand pounds for the purchase of arms. "When you come back, Dumas, you ought to establish a newspaper at Palermo." "Give me a name, my dear General." He took up a pen and wrote, "The newspaper which my friend Dumas means to establish at Palermo is to have the good name of the *Independant*, a title it will deserve the more as he intends not to spare me should I ever desert my principles as a child of the people."

Dumas started on this mission, was all but run down by a Neapolitan steamer, obtained his arms and brought them back in the regular French steamer. After this exploit he seems to have considered himself as almost directing the movement. He was flying about in his yacht, anchoring here, burning fireworks there, sending "one of my secretaries" in another direction. "The *Emma*," he says, "was lit up, to the great delight of the town. We sent for ices and cakes on board, and I brought out of the cellar champagne of the *Folliet-Louis* and *Greno brands*." But the next morning he found four thousand Bavarians and Croats, who were in the service of the King of Naples, drawn up on the shore, and twelve pieces of cannon pointed at the *Emma*. Dumas was so

excited that he seemed to think he was in command of a ship of war. "These men," he wrote, "were sent here to crush the insurrection, but I shall take good care that they shall stay here as *long as I do*, that is, until *our men* have received notice." A little later the Bavarians sent word to *him* that they were ready to desert provided they received five ducats a man. Alexander opened a subscription to raise the money.

The captain of a French frigate heard of these doings of his countryman and declared that if he had been on the spot he would have seized the yacht and arrested the owner. On learning which news the brave Alexander repaired to the Admiral's vessel and requested the Captain on board "to receive his declaration," which was to the effect, that if such a step were taken he gave them his word of honour that he would blow out the brains of the first officer or soldier who attempted such a thing. The officers of the frigate received this terrible menace with perfect politeness, and imputed the hostile disposition of the Captain to his "Legitimist" propclivities; at the same time they warned him, in a highly flattering fashion, that he (Dumas) had become *personally so obnoxious to the King of Naples*, that they felt it their duty to let him know that the Captain might be forced, by the royal

hostility, to detain him. Alexander scornfully answered that in such a case he would throw himself on the protection of *even* the English Admiral. They then advised him to get away from Naples as the safest course; and his answer to this hint was the anchoring his yacht within half pistol-shot of the forts! meanwhile the wretched King was waiting on events. The yacht lay in front of the palace, and Dumas could clearly see the King's chamber and the King himself coming to the window to search the horizon. "He knew nothing of what was going on; only yesterday he *asked what was the reason of my hatred to him*. He knew not that his uncle had caused my father to be poisoned." This is delightful.

But it was more delightful still to receive a visit from Liberio Romano, one of the ministers, who knew that the terrible Alexander, who lay in his yacht defying the royal power, was the friend and agent of Garibaldi. Dumas said he could not offer him protection, "as his flag would not be respected," but he went to the English Admiral, one "Parkings," who was then in command of the fleet. Dumas explained his situation, and prevailed on him to receive Romano in case of need.

There was even a more flattering proof of his influence in store for him. "While I write these lines

an order has been brought to me to leave the harbour in half-an-hour, or else the forts would fire on me." It seems the King had sent for the French Ambassador and said to him, that "M. Dumas had hindered General Seotti bringing supplies to the soldiers; that Dumas had brought about the revolution in Salerno; that he had then come into the port of Naples, where he had sowed his proclamations broadcast through the town, distributed arms and red shirts; he insisted that M. Dumas should not be protected any longer by the French flag, but should leave the bay." * Dumas accordingly proceeded to Castellamare, where he held quite a levee on board his little boat.

The Committee of Action came to ask his advice as to the propriety of having a provisional government. He was the "fly-wheel" of the whole movement. It became necessary that he should send despatches to the General, and he did so by a special messenger. In them he summed up the result of all his labours.

"My friend," he wrote, on August 23rd, 1860, "I am going to write to you at length, and speak to you of important matters, so read what I write with atten-

* Alexander had yet another cause for a grudge against the government of Naples. Some years before the Censor had refused to allow one of his plays to be acted. Alexander advised the manager to insert new names and a new author, which was accordingly done, and his pieces were then played.

tion. Though I should like to join you at Naples, I prefer to stay here where I can be of use to our cause. I now tell you what I have done. Every night a fresh proclamation is put up, which, without calling on the people to take up arms, stimulates the hatred against the King. Every morning the newspapers come to receive their cue. . . . On my return from Messina I put myself in communication with Salerno. Nothing can be finer than Salerno." He then explains how he tampered with the hired Bavarians. "I opened a subscription. I headed it with 500 francs. I hope to make up 20,000 francs. . . . A hundred horsemen came to me to-day offering to desert with their horses. We can account for Calerum and ten thousand more. If Menotti or any of your people should wish to make a descent there, I will do so the first, under a flag of truce, and in an hour soldiers and town are yours.

"Let me now deal with Naples. A certain number of officers have given me their word that they will not fire upon the people. But there is something yet more important,—Liberio Romano is with you!

"Give me your directions in writing, and they shall be strictly followed."

Then follows a hint, rather significant when taken

in connection with Alexander's later appointment to the charge of the museums. "You know," he says, "that, for my part, I shall never ask you for anything save for leave to shoot in the Park of Capo di Monte, and the continuation of the explorations at Pompeii. Would you wish that all the newspapers, the artists, painters, sculptors, and architects, should give a shout of joy? Then issue a decree to this effect :—

" ' In the name of the artist community. The explorations at Pompeii shall be resumed and continued, if I reach Naples.

(Signed) " ' G. GARIBALDI, Dictator. ' "

" You see, my dear friend," goes on Alexander, " I do my little all in publishing the great things you are to accomplish. Have I anything else to tell you? I think not. Do you want me? I shall go and join you. Do you wish me to stay here? I stay, although the French Admiral has let me know, that, after my proceedings here, he could give me no protection. . . . I will only content myself with telling you that I address my prayers for you to the same God that your own mother addressed."

It is easy to see, in this characteristic letter, the complacent enthusiasm and vanity of the writer. He was performing prodigies, and had removed half the

difficulties in the way of the General. The letter, indeed, had not been addressed to him, but to the public, who would learn, on the best authority, the achievements of the "great man." This was, indeed, an original mode of acquiring celebrity, viz., the addressing a letter, not merely to a public personage, but at the same moment to the many thousand readers of a Paris newspaper. But everything about our Alexander was unique and original.

Meanwhile things grew worse and worse. Alexander burned Roman candles under the very windows of the Palace, had all the radicals of Naples *swimming* about his yacht, and distributed his Folliet-Louis champagne. He sent off a fresh despatch to Garibaldi. In this he conjured him not to fire another shot, but to come at once to Naples, without losing a second. His name alone would be worth a whole army. Presently another Neapolitan official rowed out to the *Emma*, with a fresh order to quit the Bay of Naples. They started for Castellamare, where another official came on board. "There is an order," he said, "against the *Emma* staying off the coast of Naples." Dumas answered by another question: "Whose is that pretty little castle yonder?" "The King's," said the other. "No," he answered, "it belongs to me." "To you?" repeated the other,

astonished. "Yes; and the proof is that I shall take it as I go by." The officer withdrew without a word; but two vessels of war moved up at once, and placed themselves one on each side of the *Emma*. Receiving an order to depart, he sailed for a little port called Picciotta, where he distributed red shirts, and received volunteers. He thought there were enough of them to revolutionize the place. "I named Muratori captain, and the writer of the proclamation his lieutenant. I gave to each a musket and ammunition." No wonder he began to think that he had dethroned the King.

Off Capri he met a steamer, who had received orders from the Dictator, if it fell in with Dumas, "to place itself at his disposition." It towed them to Naples. The General, now at Naples, had also given orders that the arrival of the *Emma* should be telegraphed to him at once. He was waiting to receive him "on the fourth story of the Palace." "There you are at last," cried Garibaldi. "Heaven knows thou hast made us wait long enough!" He had actually *tutoyé'd* Dumas for the first time, and the latter flung himself in his arms, crying with joy. "Come," said Garibaldi, "we must not lose time—About the explorations and the shooting license." "The reader," says Dumas, "will recollect that these

were the two requests I had made. But what I had *not* asked for was the direction of the Explorations. The minister was directed on the following day to prepare a decree which named me Director of the Museums and of the Explorations." "And now," added Garibaldi, "bring Dumas to his palace." The following day he received his formal order of appointment :—

"M. Dumas is authorised to take possession, during a year from this date, of the smaller Palace of Chiomonte, in his capacity as Director of the Museums and Explorations."

As may be imagined, the news of this "job," which it certainly was, caused a perfect storm. The journals made an outcry, the people were indignant, not so much at a stranger being appointed, as at so grotesque a *fantassin* being set over them. So keen-witted a people must have been amused at his theatrical fashion of assisting at their revolution. All Europe was also amused, and Paris laughed. At Naples all sorts of malicious stories were sent about concerning him. He was spending the money of the State in orgies. He was supported at the cost of the town. "Yet," he says, indignantly, "when Garibaldi allotted me the Viceroy's apartments in the Royal Palace at Palermo, the whole city applauded,

and the municipality constituted me one of its citizens. It is true that I had never done anything for Palermo, whereas I had risked my life for Naples." In short, he was treated with ingratitude,—had, of course, to resign, and left the place in disgust.

At Paris, these proceedings, as already said, caused great amusement. The woolly head and swarthy features of course figured in the *Charivari*. In a few months his friends were surprised to learn that he had paid a flying visit to Paris, and this with the singular object of founding a restaurant at Naples. This was rather a change from the high functions of Director of the Museum. He actually ordered his *butteries de cuisine*, saying that he was born to be a cook. It was certainly true that he excelled in the art, and took a great delight in all the mysteries of la "*haute cuisine*." We know not what became of the plan of this Naples restaurant; but it probably failed, like some more of his brilliant schemes.*

* Alberic Second has described a pleasant dinner at Dumas's house, No. 107, Boulevard Malesherbes, where he saw the great man prepare all the chief dishes himself. The proprietor of the well-known inn at St. Cloud, which shared the fate of the palace and was burnt, could tell many a tale of this taste.

CHAPTER XV.

STORIES AND "QUODLIBETS."

ALL interest in Alexander Dumas's career, and, it must be added, the whole respectability of that career itself, came to a close after this expedition. His château of Monte Christo, with all its dazzling splendour, had passed from him; his great théâtre was no longer under his control; he was sunk in debt; the great workshop which supplied the world with fiction was broken up; and, worse than all, the wand with which he used to conjure had lost its charm—the magic signature of "ALEX. DUMAS" being as powerless to open the purses of the public as was the false conjuration in "Ali Baba." Instead of the brilliant Dumas, full of dash and extravagance that was often captivating, whose triumphs on the stage intoxicated delirious audiences, and whose power of story-telling attracted the curiosity and admiration even of those who did not read; instead of the odd

republican, who performed exploits during revolutionary times, and whose "*boutades*" were always interesting—we now become familiar with a sort of elderly joker, more or less disreputable in his habits, considering what his years were—a kind of adventurer, who was always in the depths of a destitution that was unattended with much inconvenience, because he contrived to have it relieved by numerous shifts and Micawber-like arts. It is disagreeable to have to deal with this changed figure; but, as in the case of Sheridan, these arts were attended with comic elements of a most entertaining kind, and as they contributed to the public stock of harmless pleasure in Paris for many a year, no account of Dumas, that affected to be even tolerably complete, could afford to pass them by. After all, this was but the complement of the more flourishing portions of his career, which began and continued steadily in the one system of "*borrowing*."

It was only natural that "*ce jobard de public*," so often humbugged, should at last grow indifferent. And here it was that he felt the first symptoms of decay. The booksellers, even if they entered into engagements with him, always felt that he would furnish, not what was his own production, but at best a hash of some old work—at worst, a literal

transcript of some recent publication; and that he was not to be depended on to complete what he had begun.

"Certainly," says M. de Villemessant, "in his entertaining recollections in the *Figaro*, the great romance writer was the last to perceive that his famous signature had no longer the same power on the Paris market, though at last it began to dawn upon him, and I am certain it caused him bitter sorrow. He felt he was no longer the Dumas of the old days. His name, however, had such a prestige that anyone who was starting a new journal was always glad to have his aid." De Villemessant was founding the *Grand Journal*,* and asked his assistance. The great Alexander at once prepared a novel in six volumes. *En attendant* the editor asked for some "roundabout papers," or "causeries," to be supplied forthwith.

"I have the very thing," cried Dumas. "I was just about to start with a whole series on snakes."

"On snakes?"

"Yes; I know the subject thoroughly. I have spent half my life studying them. Very few people know anything about these interesting creatures.

* Every inn in France must be grand—grand hotel, grand magasins, etc. Mr. Sterne was long ago struck with this feature in the French character. The wig-maker who repaired a little band said, "he might sink it in the ocean, but it would not give way."

Leave it all to me, and I promise a great success."

Half doubting, half convinced, the editor gave a reluctant assent. "After all," he said to himself, "Dumas is very likely to strike out something effective on such a subject." "If you want a little cash in advance, you can draw on me."

"I have plenty," said the other, "for the first time in my life, I must confess; but still I really have sufficient."

"He had scarcely got back to his office, when Dumas's secretary arrived with the following paper ready signed:—

"Received the sum of fifteen napoleons on account of my story.

"A hearty squeeze of the hand,
"A. D."

The following day the secretary arrived with the first *feuilleton*, and a letter.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Be kind enough to hand the bearer the sum of nine napoleons.

"A. D."

The very same evening came a despatch from Havre.

"On receipt of this please send twenty napoleons to my lodging at Frascati.

"A thousand thanks,

"A. D."

An hour later came another.

"MY DEAR BOY,—I should have said thirty, not twenty, naps.

"You are my best friend. The *feuilleton* is on the road.

"A. DUMAS."

The *finale* of this capital story is no less characteristic. The *feuilleton* arrived by post the following morning, and was found to contain just four lines of Dumas's composition, two at the beginning, two at the end, of the paper. "I copy from my good friend, Doctor Revoil, *the following particulars about snakes.*" Then came a long essay on that subject, all copied out in his own neat handwriting, and closed by this original remark: "In my next I will deal with the boa constrictor, the most curious of all the snakes." The editor of course suspended further communications on the subject.*

* We have certainly seen the *feuilleton* on "Snakes," in some of his

This amusing picture is not in the least exaggerated.

He delighted in keeping up his reputation for the power of rapid work and of dazzling people with sudden *tours de force* of this kind: The manager of the Marseilles Theatre once asked him for an original piece. Dumas having just translated or arranged a German piece founded on "Jane Eyre," sent for answer that he must have eight days. After this period he presented himself at Marseilles, and read aloud his "original" piece. At the end of the first act one of the actors, Jenneval, took him aside, and said, "My dear master, I acted this at Brussels three or four years ago, where the German play had been translated."—"Bah!" said Dumas, not in the least discomposed, "you have done for 'Jane Eyre.' But I have a far more affecting thing in my head, and shall have it ready in eight days." Next morning the newspapers announced that the great man was shut up in his room, and would be thus confined for eight days while he was writing an entirely new play. Meanwhile Dumas had sent a dispatch to Paris, directing his secretary to go to a drawer in a particular

"Causeries," or newspapers. When pressed for matter, he often began thus: "I borrow from De Musset, a charming little poem, which my readers will, etc."

room, where was the MS. of a play, "Les Gardes Forestiers," which he had translated long before, and bade him bring it down at once. In two or three days the newspapers announced that this prodigious *tour de force* had been accomplished. "It was now only the *fifth* day since he had shut himself up, and yet he has just given notice that on to-morrow he will be ready to read his new piece to the actors." The secretary had just arrived.

A story connected with his absurd piece "Kean" is not less amusing. He had made a speculative arrangement with the manager that if the total receipts touched 2000*l.* by a particular night Dumas was to receive an extra bonus of 100*l.* He arrived on the last night at the last scene, and was told that the accounts were made up and fell short by twenty francs of the amount. The manager sympathised with him, but the bargain was to be strictly construed. Dumas was dreadfully disappointed, for, as usual, he had not a sou; and the manager, pitying him, asked him did he want any ready cash? Dumas accepted a napoleon, and a few moments afterwards the treasurer came to say that the two thousand pounds was made up, as four stalls at five francs each had just been taken!

Of course there were plenty of stories as to his

Sheridan-like dealings with tradesmen. At St. Germain, during a scarcity of ice, a neighbour of his sent to the dealer for some, and was told that the whole stock was kept for the use of M. Dumas. Then, the gentleman, sent again, and bade his servant ask for the ice in the name of M. Dumas. The plan succeeded ; the ice was given, and the servant put down the money on the counter. "Ah!" cried the shopkeeper, "give me back that ice. Now I know that you are not from M. Dumas ; he never pays ready money!"

This suggests another story at Monte Christo. A vast deal of champagne was drunk by the invited and uninvited guests, until one day he was informed by his servant that there was no more left. Dumas told him to go to the Pavillon of Henry IV. (his old haunt) and get some. The man returned with word that they refused to give any more credit. Dumas then gave him a louis for the purpose, not liking to order a fresh supply. He was told the same story at dinner every day, and every day gave the servant a louis to procure some. After six weeks had passed, he happened to meet his wine merchant in Paris, and bade him send a good supply. "I suppose you don't care about my custom?" "My dear grand homme," said the other, "you get your hundred bottles a month regularly. One of these

days I intend sending you in my bill." Then Alexander saw he had been robbed. The man had helped his master out of the cellar, all the time pocketing the daily louis. He threw himself on his master's indulgence, who was too "easy going" to think of parting with a servant he was accustomed to. But he had his jest. "For this time I forgive you; but when you next sell me my own wine, at least give me credit for the price." He was of course perpetually followed by bailiffs, and one of these gentry, named Ancelin, he came to consider as a sort of friend, their relations had become so frequent and intimate. Sometimes he would put his arm in the bailiff's, saying, "I am tired of going in a carriage on these occasions; let us try walking for a change." And in this way, attended by the two "followers" at a distance behind, they would proceed along the Boulevards to call on some friendly editor or publisher, who would discharge the debt, sometimes to a large amount. Then he would coolly add, "Do give these honest fellows five louis, and add it to the rest." To this sort of generosity he was partial enough. On another occasion, being without a sou, he went to his friend Porcher to borrow five louis, which were counted down to him. He then happened to admire some ornament that was in the room, which the "ticket-dealer" was only too delighted

to offer him. A seryant was called, who carried it down carefully to his cab, on which he put his hand in his pocket and presented her with the five louis just borrowed.

He came one day to Millaud, the publisher, asking for 120*l.* on account of "a grand story" which he was about to write. The other made him a curious proposal. "Here are pens, ink, and paper, and the 120*l.*; let me shut you up in my study, and you shall write me the first two chapters." Dumas agreed joyfully, and at the end of three hours presented his captor with the work. "You won't mind," he said, "letting me have ten pounds." "Why, I gave you 120*l.*," said the other astonished. Dumas showed him a couple of pieces, all he had left. The publisher then recollected that he had not thought of a little door which opened on a sort of back stairs. Dumas had got out in this way and contrived to spend all the money in this short time.

Nothing more undignified, or even degrading, could be conceived than the "antics" and devices of his later days to raise funds. These he exhibited chiefly in those strange "catchpenny" things that inferior publishers gave him a pittance to conduct, and in which he was allowed to show himself in the most familiar shape. Such were his puffs of himself in a prospectus

where his own style is at once recognisable. Such, too, were his puffs of shops and other things to which in his later days he condescended. "There has just appeared at Paris a charming *Journal des Modes*, conducted by Madame Serrano de Wilson. . . . You can subscribe for ten francs a year at No. 73, Rue Taitbout." On another occasion he was deeply touched to hear of a person whom he had known intimately being plunged into poverty. "I make over to him fifty pounds a year," he said, generously, "out of my author's rights." It was soon seen that these were already mortgaged far beyond their full extent, for some 4000*l*. The great man burst out, when told of it, "In that case let him *take double*."

There were a hundred stories, too, as to his good-nature and generosity,—qualities natural enough in one who so freely drew on the good-nature and generosity of others. The only question is whether such easy carelessness, in giving as well as in taking, can be described by such honourable titles. He kept a sort of free table, where people would "drop in" uninvited, three or four times in the week, for years together. Sometimes he was so overrun by these guests that he was driven to travel for a short time, but the guests came during his absence. He once met a friend whom he knew when a boy, and who

was in a state of indigence, and brought him home to dinner. The friend found his place there for years, and at last discovered a scruple in accepting such hospitality without earning it in some way. "I tell you what you'll do," said Dumas; "would you go for me every day to the Pont Neuf, and see what the thermometer there marks? It would be very useful *in connection* with the receipts of the theatre." The other, delighted, repaired every day to the bridge, and brought back the exact figures, how many degrees it was in the shade, etc.; Dumas receiving the information with apparent interest, and saying, "Thank you: thank you! You don't know how useful this is to me!" This is a pleasant and characteristic little trait.*

At his own table, indeed, he was in his glory. He generally worked to the last moment. Then, without stopping to change or even arrange his careless dress, he took his seat among his guests, his slippers on, the breast of his shirt open, and displaying his enormous chest. He was thus more comfortable and more at his ease. Thus he rolled forth a tide of fun and an unwearied stream of talk, now boisterous, but always lively, and even witty.† His wit and power of

* De Villemessant, in his *Figaro*, from whose amusing "Recollections of an Editor" we have taken most of the stories that follow.

† M. De Villemessant describes with admiration how an historical allusion at table would furnish him with a text for some vivid scenes

pleasant retort never failed him. Some of his impromptus are of the first class; as when his old friend, the dealer Porcher, complained to him, in a sort of wounded way, that he never "thou'd him" as he did others. "Well, then, my dear Porcher," said the other, "*thou* must lend me fifty louis." Dining with his son, who had taken a house where the garden trees quite blocked up the windows; "Open your windows," said the father, "and let your garden have a little air."

He was fond, too, of mixing up with his own borrowings a certain air of grand and magnificent charity—charity of that theatrical kind which extorts from French lips—"Que c'est beau! magnifique! charmant!" These acts he confided to his public with the most minute details. Here is a good specimen from his journal *Le Monte Christo*:—"The other day, when buying some Flaxmans at Lecomte, No. 5, Boulevard des Italiens, I came upon an admirable lithograph of Raffet. The price was sixpence." (The number of the shop and the price of the article is given for special reasons.) He dashed off

and romantic pictures. "A date or fact that once entered his brain was graven there—he had read all the ancient chronicles." But there was his deficiency. His "pictures" of Waterloo and other important "incidents," as presented to his guests, would have been entertaining, but wholly unreliable as "pieces" of history.

a poem of some twenty-two stanzas, descriptive of the subject of the lithograph. "Some one writes every day for my autograph. Well, I make this proposal: I get twenty of the lithographs mounted on Bristol board by Lecomte; I write on the margin of each the verses you have just seen. You go to Lecomte's, *pay him what you think proper* for the lithograph and autograph, and all that you give will be paid over by Lecomte to the Archbishop's treasury." An old piece of Mercier's was one night performed, on which Alexander, in his own journal, made a pleasant disquisition. "The anecdote," says Dumas, "seemed to me curious, and well worth the twenty francs the book cost me; and if any one of my readers is such a bibliomaniac as to wish to have this copy at the same price, he is welcome,—on condition that he keeps the money for a subscription for the first good work the *Monte Christo* sets on foot. P.S. It is understood that, with the copy of Mercier, the buyer gets the original MS. of the present article (!)." As we read these things, a smile comes on the lips, and the word "Farçeur!" again is uttered. But what was this to his noble charity to Moué, the Havre sailor, who had saved so many lives!. He sat down, wrote off *a thousand* (!) autograph signatures, which were sold at twenty-five centimes a piece. On another occasion

he was asked for his autograph to send to America for a bazaar for the sick and wounded, where forty pounds was offered for it. He sat down, wrote no less than one hundred, each containing a distinct idea, all different, and sent them away. "*The number did harm*, for only sixty were sold at forty pounds a piece." * The "lowest base string" was sounded when the owner of the now successful *Petit Journal*—as great "a property" as the *London Journal*—planted him in the window of the shop, and a great crowd came according to invitation in the paper to see the great Alexander working at his desk. He never knew of the design—it was all a little good-natured trick of the proprietor to show him to the people! When he was abroad he had sent home to the *Petit Journal* some more of his *causeries*, a form of composition of which he fancied the public would never grow tired. On his return, in 1865, eager to attract notice, he went down to St. Germain, where he had once almost reigned; and there, in the theatre of the place, the former proprietor of Monte Christo invited the lieges of the place to hear him deliver some lectures or "conferences." These were autobiographical, and were headed, "My Arrival at Paris," "My Father's Friends," "My Funeral Oration by a King," but they

* A whole letter of "le grand homme" can now be procured at the shops for such articles, for two shillings.

were abruptly interrupted. From this time forth he seems to have had recourse to all kinds of curious devices for raising "the wind" and attracting attention, and to have fallen very low indeed.

Dumas made two or three excursions to London in his life, the first being about the year 1833 or 1834. In 1857 he "ran over" for a week to see the Derby, and met the leading English *littérateurs*, who were scarcely prepared to meet a *confrère* so thoroughly negro, both in air and complexion. These were but slender opportunities for acquiring a knowledge of English manners, and indeed his stories display instances more than commonly ludicrous of ignorance in reference to English manners and habits. "By industry, etc.," is one of his English characters made to say to a young fellow starting in the world, "you may reach the highest honours, rank, wealth, nay, even become *Lord Mayor*." In another work mention is made of "Les premiers Lords de Londres."

Many other good stories suggest themselves of his adventures with his tradespeople. That fatal want of ready money, in spite of his vast earnings, led him into the drollest shifts. Thus a bootmaker to whom he owed some money, went down repeatedly to the castle of Monte Christo to ask for it. Dumas would welcome him with delight. "What, you again my

dear fellow ! The very man I wished for. I want you to send me three pair of patent leather boots." "But my bill," said the other. "We'll talk of that after breakfast. Meanwhile, go and look at the Arabians who are carving the Moorish pavilion in the garden—wonderful !" The bootmaker breakfasted, then dined, a magnificent bouquet was pulled for his wife, while Alexander stuffed his pockets with fruit for the children. The carriage was ordered to take him to the station, and on going away the host put a Napoleon into his hand, with a "for your railway fare." This was repeated a good many times during the year, and yet Dumas only owed him some ten or twelve pounds !

The history of the gold watch might almost serve as a specimen of many. One morning a young man in a state of destitution presented himself and told his story. He had nothing left but his father's gold watch, and sooner than take it to the pawnbroker's he thought he would offer it to the great man. Alexander was touched, took the watch, tried his pockets, and found only a few Napoleons. "Here, my friend," he said, "come for the rest in a day or two." Dumas forgot all about the transaction ; but at the time named the man appeared to claim the balance, some ten Napoleons. The host had of course no money, but at once proposed giving his bill. The other agreed eagerly.

"I know a usurer," he said, "who will do it for fifty francs, or twenty per cent. "But you mustn't lose by me," cried Dumas; "here are fifty francs to pay the discount." The man was going away full of gratitude, when he was called back. "Since you *do* know a usurer who will discount my name, perhaps you could manage to get *me* a bill done for a thousand francs at three months." "To be sure," said the other, and the next day brought Dumas forty Napoleons, ten being deducted for discount. "You are a very clever fellow," said Dumas. "Come to me,—I am just in want of a confidential agent for these daily matters; you shall have board and lodging." The proposal was accepted, and "the man of the watch" entered on his duties, which were chiefly to get bills renewed, in which task he succeeded,—the bill for the watch "running" on, and rising steadily with each renewal, "like the sea in a melodrama," till it reached three or four thousand francs. When it was finally discharged, out of a sum raised on Dumas' copyrights, the "man of the watch" had received fifty thousand francs! *

* De Villemessant.

CHAPTER XVI.

FATHER AND SON.

It is lamentable indeed to follow all the devices he attempted to try and restore his languishing reputation. He longed even to be talked of. Hence those confidences in the "Monte Christo" and the "Mousquetaire," which at times became simply scandalous. He described conversations with his son Alexander, and the good nature of the latter in introducing him to those famous ladies, La Dame aux Camelias, La Dame aux Perles and others. This "undressing himself in the public streets," as Jacquot happily called it, was owing to vanity and imbecility combined. No one was more distressed at these exhibitions than his son Alexander, who all through had the reputation of being dutiful, forbearing, and filial to a remarkable degree.

"Alexandre Dumas Fils" has made a reputation for himself in quite a different direction. He has been careful and conscientious as his father was careless and

unscrupulous; and as we have before shown, his works, though fully as corrupt, show study, observation, and great power of mental analysis. This has enabled him to show a certain originality in devising ingenious complications in reference to the violation of the nuptial vow. More singular is the union of this lax practice with elaborate preaching of the most wholesome kind; and it will be remembered with what scathing severity he lately denounced his countrymen's follies and vices, following this preaching by prompt production of the "Princesse Georges" and the "Visite de Noces." * It is impossible, however, to refuse him the credit of polished wit and refined epigram, and some of his plays, when acted by the polished artists of the Gymnase, were the perfection of elegance.

His father, always *en scène*, used to strike attitudes with the boy, introducing him to friends as "his best work." Their relations curiously suggest those of Sheridan and his son Tom. There was the same jesting, the same borrowing, the same awe on the part of the father. Alexandre Fils was often tried sorely by

* "L'homme-femme" (*i. e.* the married state), is the title of his last brochure—a delicate inquiry into the propriety of killing a wife when discovered *flagrante delicto*. This nice question has brought into the field a whole cloud of *esprits forts*, including Emile de Girardin. A community with a taste for stirring matter of this kind must be radically debased.

the greater Alexander's follies ; but was never so hurt as when the public would insist that he had brought his father on the stage as "Le Père Prodigue." Of this he must be acquitted, though the public was not to blame, who knew well that if there was a *père prodigue* in the world it was the father of Alexandre Fils. There was, at least, a want of tact here.

Alexander, in dearth of copy, would describe some of his visits to a friend of his son's, where a little girl was present. "Come here, dear," said the father ; "let me embrace you." "*Delighted* : but on one condition—that you let me take a good look at you." "Why do you want a good look at me?" "Because they told me you were *such a great man* !" The great man relates this little story himself. When Alexander, the son's, first play, "La Dame aux Camelias" was produced in Paris, his father was at Brussels. The son wrote joyfully to tell him the news of its success. "Nothing but flowers and bravos ! *I fancied I was at one of your pieces*." Dumas, however, was said not to think over highly of his son's talents—declaring that he was too much in earnest, and his ideas too *bourgeois* and regular. The son, on the other hand, would lecture him on his irregularities, without, of course, any effect ; seeing which result, he accepted such behaviour with at least tolerance.

"My father," he was reported to have said, "is a great baby of mine—born when I was quite a little child." There was real wit in his answer to a lady of quality who was sympathising with him on this trial. "Well," he answered pleasantly; "if he does not supply me with a good example, he gives me a good excuse." Of a higher quality is his well-known remark, "My father is so vain that he is quite capable of getting up behind his own carriage to make people think *he keeps a negro!*" At a dinner some one told a droll story of a debtor and creditor which concerned Dumas fils. A neighbour whispered to him that the hero of it was his father. "Nonsense," answered the other, "he would have put it in his memoirs." These jests were rather rough, but it was only after being sorely tried that he indulged in them.

With all the money that was passing through his hands the father had never, of course, any to spare for his family, but was always coming to them for aid. On one occasion Alexandre fils had to meet a bill, and wanted a small sum to make it up. He went to his father to ask for a hundred francs. "The deuce," said the great man, "I was going to you to get fifty francs. I must have them." The result was the son came away without the sum he wanted and poorer by fifty francs. This is really like Sheridan.

Another time when he was about to dine with a friend at a café, he found he had only ten francs about him. He left his friend in the street and ran up to get a few francs from his father. He came back with a rueful face: "You must now dine at home with me," he said; "he got the money out of me." The father, however, often grumbled at his son's carefulness, and more orderly life. "Would you believe it," he said one morning when he could not find his boots, "would you believe it, that my Alexander has no less than a dozen pair all arranged in order on a shelf of his wardrobe. He'll never show real genius." *

There was something very painful in their relation—the child being brought up by a mother long since abandoned or neglected by the dissipated old father, who persevered in ancient follies far beyond a period when decency and age ought to have made him give them up. He found, however, a certain cold air of reproof in his son, which he rather dreaded. He was afraid of being scolded. He knew that Alexandre fils disliked the parasites that preyed upon him, and still more the reckless prodigality he would have to witness. When he came, which was rarely, the elder Alexander would hurry away or even

* These and other stories will be found in *De Mirecourt* (Jacquot) and in newspapers like the *Figaro*.

conceal the undesirable visitors, male or female, with which his house was usually filled.* Even this was a sign of grace. On his side the son shrank from the gang of sharpers and adventurers who were always in possession of his father's house, and the overflow of which the latter did not scruple to send on to his son. Finding it, however, in vain to think of reforming him, the son gave up the task, treated these follies with a resigned and good-natured tolerance, and was to earn in the circles in which he lived the character of a truly affectionate and considerate son. To this father he could address some graceful and tender lines, which breathe the true spirit of filial admiration and affection.†

“ A MON PÈRE.

“ Ainsi donc, ô penseur, ô poète, ô mon père,
Tu ne rompras jamais ta chaîne littéraire,
Et tu seras forcé de laisser tour à tour
Les autres s'enrichir de son riche domaine
Sans avoir seulement, au bout de ta semaine,
Le repos de septième jour.

“ C'est bien ! résigne toi ! les fleurs de la campagne,
La chanson des oiseaux riant dans la montagne,
Le tranquille réveil du pâtre sous son toit,
Le vallon souriant au soleil qui décline,
Et les chastes parfums qu'exhale la colline,
Faits pour le laboureur, ne sont pas faits pour toi.

* De Villemessant.

† They are given by De Villemessant in his “Mémoires d'un Journaliste,” *Le Figaro*, Jan. 26, 1872.

- “ Il faut qu’incessamment on voie à ta fenêtre
Lorsque la nuit commente, et quand le jour y’a naître,
Des lampes du travail l’éternelle clarté,
Et tu ne pourras pas, forcé de ton génie,
Après vingt ans d’étude en d’ombre et d’insomnie,
Respirer, à prix d’or, trois mois de liberté. .
- “ Qu’importe ! sois le champ couvrant tout de ses gerbes,
Et laisse, chaque année, au milieu de tes herbes,
Les moissonneurs faucher ton blond et pur froment ;
Sois l’astre merveilleux dont tout propriétaire
Peut acheter la flamme, et qui loin de la terre
Dans un monde inconnu règne splendidement.
- “ Travaille donc toujours pour tous et pour toi même !
Verse, immense forêt, sur un monde que t’aime
Son ombre, tes parfums, tes chansons, ton repos.
Rends à Dieu ses rayons, et rends lui tes murmures,
Et ne t’occupe pas si de quelques ramures
Des bergers inconnus nourrissent leurs troupeaux.
- “ Travaille ! pour les tems qui béniront le nôtre,
Combats comme un guerrier, prouve comme un apôtre.
Toute paisiblement dans ton lit de roseaux,
Et sans t’inquiéter, comme Rhin, le vieux fleuve,
Si dans ton large cours tout un peuple s’abreuve,
Garde la profondeur de tes limpides eaux !
- “ Travaille ! et cependant si demain tu ramènes
Le pavillon Français dont pendant six semaines
T’abrita le pays qui te le devait bien,
Des rhéteurs avortés, tout fiers de leur famille,
Mirabeaux de hazard, Berryers de pacotille,
Pour qu’on sache leurs noms insultent le tien !
- “ Travaille obstinément ! Moi je veille à ta porte.
Ce qui diront de moi ces hommes ! peu m’importe !
Je me ferai sans eux le nom que je voudrai,
Je ne veux jusques-là, pieuse sentinelle,
Que garder de l’affront la gloire paternelle,
Comme un Palladium Sacré !

“ A. DUMAS FILS.”

This touching testimony to the father's never-ceasing labour represents one of the few points in his life that excite true sympathy and even compassion. Janin corroborates this story of toil. "He lived without a moment's rest. Even when travelling he wrote, composed, thought. . . Every subject suited him:—story, history, romance, poem, introduction, prospectus, preface, epilogue, and even the newspaper, all served his purpose, and helped forward the self-imposed task; crime and vice, rags and lace, the executioner on his scaffold, the priest in his parsonage, the robber in his cave, the beggar on the road, the young girl in the spring light. He was the bond slave of story-telling. His youth, his whole life went by in obeying this task-master—the ogre that swallowed up his genius." The same eminent critic, with the delightful confidence of his countrymen, makes one of those bold statements which cause the more matter-of-fact natives of colder countries to throw up their hands in wonder. "His grand secret—and he loved to boast of this himself—was that he always respected his reader." "I am as fatherly," he used to say, "as Sir Walter Scott himself, and no mother has need to say to her daughter, when I come in, 'Leave the room, my dear.'"

In public, too, the son was no less eager to testify

his affection. In a preface to one of his plays he speaks of his "vaillant père" who, "brought up in the forest in the open air, under the open sky, and driven by want and the force of his own genius, swooped down one day on the great city, and flung himself on literature, as his father used to do on the enemy, slashing and cutting down everything that did not give way to him. Then began those Cyclopean labours which lasted forty years. Tragedy, melodrama, history, romance, travels, comedy, you flung everything into that busy mill of your brain, and peopled the world of fiction with a cloud of new characters. Newspaper, book, drama, were found too slight for your broad shoulders. You fed France, Europe, America; you enriched booksellers, translators, and plagiarists; you left the printers and copyists panting; and, devoured by the need of producing, you did not perhaps, always sufficiently test the metal you were using, and have sometimes taken up and flung into the furnace any stuff that chanced to come in your way. All that was your own took the shape of a bronze casting—what was not, evaporated in clouds of smoke: You have, therefore, wrought some bad iron, but on the other hand, how many nobodies have been lit up and warmed by your forge. . . And if the hour for restitution were to strike how you would gain in

recovering all that you gave away and all that was stolen from you.* At times you laid down your great hammer, and stood at the threshold with sleeves turned up, chest in the air, face smiling; you wiped your brow and looked up at the calm stars and inhaled the freshness of the night air. Or else you bounded forth, taking the first road that presented itself, and escaping like a prisoner. You spanned the ocean, crossed the Caucasus, scaled *Ætna*, always attempting something vast; and then, your lungs distended with fresh air, returned to the cave again. Your great form cast its broad outline on the fiery hearth. The crowd clapped its hands, for it always delights in this fecundity of production, in grace, force, simplicity, genius. And you have all these—with generosity to boot, which has made you a millionaire for other people, but a beggar for yourself. Suddenly there came one day an inattention, an indifference, and ingratitude on the part of this crowd, once so attentive and so controlled. It went another way; it wanted to see something else. You had given it too much. We the children were coming on, the small creatures

* This is rather ungracious towards Maquet and the other deputies. The great man did think the services of these agents worth a good deal, and they certainly brought him a vast deal of cash. The idea, too, of making the accusation that the great pillager was himself pillaged, is certainly novel.

who were doing the very opposite of what you the grown-up ones were doing. You became 'Dumas senior' with those who preserved respect, 'Old Dumas' with the free and insolent, and you were even to hear it whispered, 'I declare the son has far more talent.' How you must have laughed at that! But no, you did not; you were merely proud of me, like some ordinary father, and perhaps thought they were right. Dear best fellow, so true and good! You would have given me all your glory as you used to do all your money when I was an idle boy. And I am only too delighted to seize this opportunity of bowing down before you, doing you homage before them all, and embracing you, to show the world how I love you! Let others of my age and capacity claim to be your equals. As they have not your name that is their own concern. But I would wish those who come after to know, when they shall read our two names one under the other on the scroll of this century, that whatever people choose to say I have never looked on you but as my father, my friend, and my teacher:—that thanks to *you* being near me, I have never been puffed up, always considering myself a mere *Bambino*, having such a standard to measure myself with."

Generous and affectionate words are these—honour-

able to the son, if not to the father. They present an excellent popular portrait of the great man, such as he might appear to his thousand and one superficial acquaintances. For, according to the acute distinction made by Johnson in the case of Garrick, "he had friends, but no friend." The general outline of the "good fellow," always smiling, ready with a joke, giving five gold pieces to a servant, would make him pass fairly in the ranks as generous, and as one who was ungratefully treated by the public whom he had served so long and so faithfully. There is, indeed, a conventional standard of polite morality which answers excellently for those who see a man from afar off, and have little or no dealings with him. But a just and impartial observer must decide that the generosity of the spendthrift is usually no more than carelessness or recklessness, that the never-failing smile and bon mot is rarely affected by the sight of even family misfortunes, and that this happy "equanimity" is seldom disturbed by the misfortunes of others. There was no neglect and ingratitude on the side of the public, which had shown itself enduring and patient to a surprising extent, and which, at last, was disgusted, not at its old favourite, but at the vamped up writings of every convenient hack, which contained no larger amount of his composition than his own signature.

CHAPTER XVII.

DECAY.

1867.

IN these days, however, there was to be some little comfort in store for him. He or his plays had long been forgotten—at least the public had grown tired of both. One of the smaller theatres, a level to which his pieces had now fallen, had ventured to revive his “Antony,” an exhibition found too “strong” for the correct morals of the Imperial Court. The censure interfered, and there was much angry discussion and bitterness before the performance was allowed. It was, on the whole, fortunate for Dumas, for the political feeling of the time was glad to support anything that annoyed or inconvenienced the existing *régime*. As the poor old *littérateur* was believed to be an object of hostility to the Government, this helped in some degree to give an interest to the revived play. But there were some other and more legitimate causes which made the public turn

back to his works. For some years, now, it had been satiated with those monstrous exhibitions known as "Féeries,"—pieces like the "Biche aux Bois," the "Pied de Mouton," and "Cendrillon," and which made up for their tediousness—for tedious they were—by the most reckless and dazzling display of sumptuous dresses, costly scenery, and whole legions of "femmes suspendues." These gorgeous spectacles, narrowly bounded, as they were, in their powers of entertainment, could only appeal to a diseased curiosity, and in a few years, after amazing prodigies of scenic art, dress, &c., the public became satiated, and the managers hopelessly engulfed. They then bethought them of the old entertainer who had so often led them to victory, and who at least had had the power of throwing vast audiences into hysterical convulsions. The Cluny theatre was the first to make the experiment.

"Antony" was brought forward in October, 1867, and was welcomed uproariously. A crowd of four or five hundred persons watched for the author, and attended him to his carriage. This recalled the old days. As he says, with a sort of rueful profanity, it sounded to him like "Lazare, lève toi!" The managers woke up, asked for the address of the man they had so long forgotten, and early in the following year

his friends—he had many—were delighted to call attention to the fact that no less than four of his pieces were being played on the same night at four of the leading houses. At the Théâtre Français was revived the entertaining “Mariage sous Louis Quinze,” with the *fine* and elegant Bressant as De Candale.* “I cannot lie down,” Dumas wrote in delight to the actress who played the heroine, “without telling you how beautiful, how true, pathetic, tender, poetical, and despairing you showed yourself to-night. I try to find some fault, so as not to let you be too proud, but cannot.

“Well done, my dear Augustine; you are now at the age when women show themselves really women, and when *true* artists discover their talent. Love is a flower, but talent a fruit. Try and act through the *fifty performances* of ‘Antony’ as you have done to-night and you will eclipse—I do not say those who are gone, but certainly everything now living. Let us not despair of art, my dear girl. With my past and your future all will be restored.”†

At the Odéon was given the fantastic “Kean;” at the Porte St. Martin, the “Jeunesse des Mousque-

* It may be doubted if this accomplished actor appears to more advantage in any other part, or, indeed, if the Théâtre Français has a more graceful piece in its *répertoire*.

† *Paris Journal*, 1867.

taires ;" and at the *Gaieté*, the "*Reine Margot*." Besides these, others of his pieces were revived, and at the *Odéon*, situated in the *Academic Quarter*, the students raised a commotion. Cries of "*Vive Ruy Blas!*" "*Vive Dumas!*" greeted him ; and there was a sort of collision at the doors between these partisans and the police. Still it was remarked that there was an old-fashioned air about "*Antony*" and "*Kean*," and to the surprise of old habitués, who recalled the "palpitating" audiences, the women in hysterics, the clenched teeth and convulsed fingers of the men—tokens that distinguished the old performances, the feverish passages produced scarcely any effect. The truth was, these pieces were the product of agitated times, when the morbid *Byron* misanthropy was in vogue, and when a certain passion and agitation was abroad. Now it seemed out of tune, out of key, and as "flat" as champagne long uncorked. Again, as was shown when we were dealing with these plays, mere brutal exhibitions of crime and passion held in themselves the seeds of certain decay ; and, as in the case of the "*Féeries*," once curiosity was exhausted, which it speedily was, there was nothing left to attract. The *Français* was playing his "*Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle*," and it was then remembered that the great *Mars* had worthily closed her career as

she had begun it, in the part of an *ingénue* ; but this admirable piece is independent of author or change of public taste, and will always hold its ground. It touches human sympathies very much as does the "Lady of Lyons." But it is not so independent of acting and *mise en scène*, for it was fitted with exquisite nicety to the traditions and style of the Français, requiring the elegant state and tempered exaggeration of that house. Mars, Rachel, Plessy, Brohan are the great names connected with this character.

Delighted with this new-found sympathy, the author unbosomed himself in his favourite open fashion. He told how Rachel had once insisted on playing the part—how he proposed "Christine," or some such tragic character, but she, with true histrionic perverseness, insisted on the character she had chosen. At the rehearsals she made but an indifferent exhibition, and at last allowed the author to instruct her. As was the case with Dorval and other actresses, she was overcome by the exhausting emotions of the play, and for the purpose of resting her fatigued soul allowed herself to be cast by the great Alexander into periodical trances of ten or fifteen minutes each ! But in spite of all his instructions, the performance was a failure.

One of the pleasing features of this revival was

to see the hearty good-will and good-nature of friendly journalists, which shows that the *Cher Maître*, as they used to call him, was himself good-natured. Rapturous praises were heard on all sides. Jouvin, an agreeable *chroniqueur* on the *Paris Journal*, wrote a pleasant little paper on the subject of two of his plays, "Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle" and "Les Demoiselles de St. Cyr," recalling some incidents in connection with their first production,—how Brunswick had brought "an idea," which he had disposed of for two or three hundred francs,—a bargain he regretted when he found that "Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle" was drawing such crowds;—how he wrote a hint of these wishes to Dumas, who replied in the following satisfactory yet delicately satirical fashion:—

"I heartily thank you, my dear friend, for wishing to have your *share* in the good fortune that has just befallen me. I fancy I am more skilful in putting dialogue together than figures. I left out an 'ought' in the sum we agreed upon for 'your' piece. It is worth, my dear Brunswick, not 300, but 3000 francs."

The story about "Les Demoiselles de St. Cyr" was that, being in distress for a piece, he had flown to his friend, De Leuven, and begged for something that he could work up into a drama for the Français. The other said he had nothing in hand but a little trifle for

one of the vaudeville theatres. In despair, Dumas carried it off, and from it calmly fashioned an important drama. These little stories were intended to show the skill and readiness of the great writer; but he seemed rather annoyed at such compliments, and wrote to say they were quite untrue. None of the assistants had written a single word of either piece; they had merely *verbally* suggested the idea.* Jouvin returned to the matter in the next number of the paper, setting out Dumas's amusing letter with compliments; but at the close he said that his authority for the first story was Dumas fils, and for the second De Leuven himself. Alexander left the matter so, and wisely allowed the controversy to drop. This, of course, was not deliberate untruth; the multitude of his transactions and his glowing imagination making him fancy that everything he touched he not only adorned but made his own.

Still believing that his old popularity was only slumbering, he clung to the belief that he had merely

* Dumas, in several of his scattered writings, insists with much pride on the merit of the opening incident, where Richelieu and the Marquise restore to each other the pieces of the broken ring. This, he says, was suggested by a playing card which he and an Italian friend had torn in two, with the understanding that the presentation of the fragment should be a token. Yet the ring transaction has always seemed the most artificial part of the play, and has really little to do with the story.

to come forward in his old style, and with the old flourish; to rally round him thousands and thousands of readers. Alas! those days of great enchantment, when a mere "yes" or "no," written down by him or under his "direction," was worth francs,—had passed away. In spite of disastrous failures with the *Mousquetaire* the *Monte Christo*, and other ventures, he believed that a newspaper, conducted by "himself alone," would still effectually touch the true chord.

He contrived, therefore, to arrange for the production of such an organ, and on February 4th, 1868, appeared the first number of the "D'ARTAGNAN," which was headed by a picture of a quixotic soldier, mounted on a lean horse. His ready and persuasive tongue had found a publisher; but his opening was in a subdued key, very different from the old *vainqueur* style. He set out his programme in a curiously deferential tone. He said he thought people had not quite lost their taste for the old *feuilleton*, which had been latterly strangely neglected. This he would try and revive. He only wanted people to subscribe for three months; he would prefer, in fact, not to have any longer period. He would, accordingly, introduce one on the old old model,—his own familiar "chats," criticisms, etc. He led off with some letters

from Vienna, by his daughter, "Marie Alexandre Dumas," and, later, with a story from the same hand, which he stated in his judgment, would turn out one of the most remarkable novels that had ever, etc. He also turned his taste for cookery to account, and for two or three numbers furnished a *ménu*, with divers culinary hints; but after a few turns relaxed,—indeed, after a couple of months, he seemed to grow tired of the whole business, and fell back on his old arts for filling the columns of the paper. Old "chats" (*causeries*), which had figured in other newspapers, were coolly reprinted, without alteration of a word,—such as the account of the heroines of his son's stories, "La Dame aux Camélias," and the rest. A good portion of the "History of my Animals" had appeared in the *Mousquetaire*, but had been cut short by the sudden demise of the paper. He originally promised to resume it in the *D'Artagnan*; but, as matter began to fail him, he thought that this would be a waste of power. He, accordingly, issued an apology of the most amusing kind. He must consider, he said, his readers. How could he present them with an incomplete work that commenced, as it were, "in the middle"? It would be fairer on the whole to begin at the beginning, and, accordingly, the whole account of his cats, dogs,

horses, etc., was duly recommenced. Not content with this, he retold and recopied the story of all his quarrels with the Théâtre Français, with pages of narrative from historical novels of his own. By and by he began to disappear from the column altogether; but occasionally wrote, or allowed to be written, humiliating jeremiads over his fallen fortunes. Where were all his fine pictures, his birds, which his Circassian had neglected to feed when the master could not attend to them himself, and which had flown away? Where were all his costly dresses, brought home from the East? His castles had passed away, —even his many orders, which, arranged on a shield, had been hung up in the cabin of the *Emma*, had gone to the bottom, when that vessel was wrecked in the Mediterranean. “The thunder-bolt had fallen on him.” Such was the dismal strain.

A greater humiliation was the announcement that for the first night of some piece a stall had been refused to the reporter of the *D'Artagnan*, on the pretext that all the places had been taken. In a deprecating way he made a request that for the future all theatres would reserve a stall for the *D'Artagnan*, to be *paid for*, as he wished that his readers should have the benefit of proper criticism. What a change this for the great *exploiteur*, to whose feet came every manager, and to

whom every theatre flung wide its doors! At last, as the readers fell off, he had to come to "*primes*" or bonuses, offering to regular subscribers an admission to the Pré Catalan, or a volume out of the one franc Lévy series, or a Swiss clock! In six months the luckless venture collapsed.

The most curious feature in all these journalistic failures, is that so skilful a *littérateur* and manager, one who had the little arts of the press at his fingers' ends, should have shown himself so incompetent in all his attempts at conducting a newspaper. His newspapers are simply contemptible, and show none of the tact and power of entertainment which distinguish even the most ordinary Paris paper. But the truth was, he was too indolent to take any trouble in the matter. Once any money was paid to him in advance, as it almost invariably was, the whole became irksome, and he only thought of some new scheme. It was remarkable that in these various journals of his, he was fond of working some charitable and even pious scheme, which contrasted oddly with some lax story or jest found in another portion of the paper. Readers of French journals will have discovered that this is a good deal "in the way of trade," and that among the subscribers is a large *clientèle dévote* whose tastes have to be considered. This may seem an ungracious solution, but

that the fact is so there can be as little doubt, as of the impulsive though spendthrift charity of Alexander Dumas himself. He was later able to enumerate with some pride all the good works that his newspaper had aided. "The Hospital of the Little Incurables *founded*," which is surely an exaggeration, considering that the *Mousquetaire* obtained only 120*l.*; "the monument to Moreau—and Léon Regnier bought out of the conscription." When "Notre Dame des Arts" was established, he took the translation of a little German play which his friend Albert Wolff brought him, shaped it, disposed of it for 800*l.*, and presented it to the charity. Allowing for some constitutional exaggeration in the amount, it is no doubt true that he was generous and charitable after his own fashion. In his journal, as we have seen, he introduced his daughter, Marie Alexandre Dumas, who had married a M. Petel. Her first book was a story called "Au Lit de Mort"; and if it was a satisfaction to find his son drawing such types as "Ladies of Camelias, Pearls," etc., thus proving himself the worthy child of "Antony," the father's heart must have been no less gladdened by the spectacle of a daughter following in the same track. A critic at least describes her book as containing "certains tableaux très nets," or rather "trop nets. C'est une mélange de mysticisme et de

sensualité. Il demontre les dangers du vice et l'horreur de l'adultère, de façon à donner envie d'en essayer."

Notwithstanding these failures his spirit did not flag. The new year found him in a charming hotel in the Rue d'Amsterdam, whose walls were decorated with elegant frescos, for he always loved these refinements. There he lived with a pleasant secretary, Pontjést, whose name is familiar to readers of the lighter Paris newspapers. But now there was but little work for the secretary. He was still the same—"vaillant et toujours jeune," and his former *protégé*, Asseline, was glad to be able to give him an entertainment. The "dear master" arrived punctually, accompanied by the secretary. To meet him there was a well-known barrister, Victor Foucher, Henry Murger, and Quidant, the pianist, whose compositions are familiar to many an English performer. Three ladies, afterwards celebrated or rather talked about, now candidates for the stage, "engarlanded" the table. These were Blanche D'Antigny, Marguerite Bellanger, the heroine of an Imperial scandal, and Juliette Beau. They were eager to obtain the favourable opinion of the guest, and exerted themselves to the utmost. The dinner was gay. Murger, already suffering from a mortal disease, sang one of his favourite songs. Alexander was at his best, and told stories of his travels and of his life.

"As he was always a man of good taste, he spoke before these future queens of the stage as if he was in presence of duchesses, and with that careful attention to language *which really takes nothing from the salt of wit.*" In spite of this handsome tribute to decency, he contrived to amuse them the whole evening, which proved to be that of the Orsini attempt.

He was ever good-natured to young authors, who delighted in his society, and found entertainment in his never-flagging spirits and powers of conversation. All spoke of him with affection. At the same time it must be said that the great *littérateur* found in such young admirers exceedingly useful aide-de-camps. One of these followers, when the great story-teller was lying on his death-bed fondly put together all he could recollect of their dealings,* and presents a very amusing and graphic portrait. His first introduction was at the St. Germain theatre, during the performance of "Hamlet," and where the chief figure was Alexander himself in his full regimentals as commander of the National Guard, bustling about, shaking hands with every one, doing all the honours of the place, and receiving all the honours in the name of "Williams Shakespeare," who in this shape at least was found very dull.

* "Courrier d'Autrefois," in the *Indépendance Belge*, Nov. 10, 1870.

There was something pitiable in the growing decay which was now steadily setting in ; for the spectacle of a man of genius reduced, growing old, and obliged to accept the attention of young men, in exchange for which is furnished the inappropriate “ lees and rinsings ” of his mind—and this because he is “ dropped ” by old friends,—is one of the most humiliating conceivable. Still such a condition is often the result of debt and extravagance, and of a hopelessness and helplessness ; for at an advanced age the energy that could set to work to repair disasters cannot be looked for. But in this instance his old age was to be marked by scandals that shocked even the disorderly society of the Empire, and one notorious incident (which need not be mentioned here) lost him the sympathy even of the most tolerant. “ The present generation never knew the brilliant Dumas,” says his friend De Villemessant. “ The disorder of his later life had told on his figure. No one who saw his decayed and shabby appearance, would have conceived the dashing beau of former days.

“ Under this affected gaiety lay a profound melancholy. Do what he would to distract it, he knew well that he was no longer the witty, sparkling Dumas of other days. The king of the *feuilleton* had brought his name into discredit with the newspapers.

The prince of the stage had been thrust aside by new talent rising on all sides. Not that any one of them could be named beside him, or could take his place. Hence it was, that he felt himself obliged in his old age to quit Paris. His reputation was still great abroad, and he felt himself more at home in countries where they still saw in him the Dumas of old days, rather than in Paris, where he had to endure the indifference of managers and publishers. "You don't wish, then, to stay among us?" said Wolff, as he wrung his hand at parting. "As little as I can," replied the other: "the only future left for me now begins at the frontier."* This of course was sad enough, but, as we have seen, it was he himself that was accountable for such exile. A few friends clung to him; among whom was the faithful Millaud, who had founded many a journal, in everyone of whose enterprises was a column open to Dumas. But the decay of his powers was evident to everyone except himself. He still continued his laborious habits and taste for hard work.

In the "Recollections," from which we have borrowed so abundantly, the vivacious author, M. de Villemessant, while deploring this decay of a great spirit, unconsciously sets before us a picture of the

* "Mémoires d'un Journaliste, 2e Série," 294.

times which, for all its vivacity, is depressing enough. They indeed explain that social decay which has produced such disastrous results in France. For here are "Memoirs of a Journalist" which might naturally be expected to set out pleasant recollections of literary life, a good deal that was political, sketches of public men, etc., yet these volumes seem to be no more than an account of a number of voluptuaries, who seemed to live for two things—dinners or suppers, and "les femmes !" Most, too, seemed to have died of this wholesome mode of life—decayed, imbecile or mad, and bankrupt. All the ladies who figure in the chronicle, who are the heroines of every adventure, hold rank in the hierarchy of the *demi monde*, and their claims to consideration seem to be founded on this very position. That such "fast life" is rife in our own country must be granted ; but it can be boldly denied that there is any such unwholesome recognition, or public glorification of what is an offence to society. For all these grave, wise, witty, brilliant directors of public opinion, the real profession in which they aspired to shine was "les femmes," as it was sung so merrily at the "Bouffes."

To be named as the hero of an intrigue ; to supplant a friend in the good graces of a "cocotte ;" to be reported the accepted admirer of Madame X——

such has been the noble ambition of some of the liveliest intellects of France. Their work on their journal was but a means to this grand end. This is noted here, not in pharisaical spirit, but because it goes to the root of the decay in France. For men who devote their lives to this frivolous, contemptible calling must be content to abdicate the higher functions of leading and teaching the world. Dumas, as we have seen, points the moral in a very disastrous way. Novels, drama, the jest, the anecdote,—all deal with the one subject—"les femmes." There is, to say the least, a childishness in this course, and the best comment is to be found in the little histories of the fascinating Roger de Beauvoir, Félix Solar, of poor Dumas himself, and many more.

The last stage was reached when he began to lend his pen to the "confection" of puffs for tradespeople. This has always been a department of French journalism; and no English reader could conceive the skill, labour, and energy with which the system was carried out. It was left for an eminent French journalist to reveal to us the secrets of this *métier*, the science of which consisted in working on curiosity, feelings, and generous sentiments. This underlies, if not in that actual shape, the whole of French journalism, regulating all those scattered little puffs of

artists' books, "Articles de Paris," etc.; and M. de Villemessant, a practical editor, explains to us candidly how the system was pursued. He described how De Girardin farmed out to him a handsome "compartment" of the *Presse*, which were to be filled with these traps and devices. Here is a specimen of this sort of advertisement.

"THE GRISSETTE'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

"On Sunday last the inmates of a house in the Rue St. Honoré were busily engaged in trying to secure a pretty bird which was fluttering about the house. The eagerness to secure the little creature was the more natural, as it was seen that it had a piece of paper tied round its neck. It was at last captured, the paper unfolded and read. It ran thus,—'Destitute, sick, and with no resource left, I know not what is to become of me. I am but twenty years old, but *I cannot devote myself to a life of shame . . . All will be over to night. My only friend in the wide world is this little bird, to which I now give its liberty. I conjure who finds it to take care of it. Poor little thing.—MARIE.*' The bird was caught by Madame X——, proprietor of the emporium in —— Street, who has given it an asylum, and cherishes this interesting orphan with a truly religious care."

This device succeeded excellently, many people

actually asking to see the little bird, so that the mistress of the shop had to buy one! This is ludicrous enough, but it will be seen that honest sympathies, which might be turned to the profit of real distress, are here played with for trade purposes.

We may thus gather a notion of the fashion in which the great French nation allows itself to be "dandled," and served with sweetmeats by those who direct its journals. Poor "jobard de public!" which buys a newspaper, only to find that a great deal of the *literary* department is hired to tradesmen, and is merely a disguised advertisement. The accident where the victim was carried into the shop of M. X——, the eminent apothecary, who, "par des soins les plus tendres," succeeded in bringing him round; the capital *bon mot* uttered about a lace shawl supplied by Madame V——, the eminent *modiste*; all this is surely infantine and unworthy of a refined community. So, too, with those advertisements which used to cover the drop scene at a certain theatre—a system which was so resented by audiences in England, that it has not been repeated. It is this sort of helplessness in the French public which so amazes people of other countries, a public that can accept every kind of treatment from its leaders, even to the revolting despotism of the *claque*.

This then being an established system, it would be hard to blame Dumas for his derelictions in the same direction. Indeed it seems strange that this professor of self-advertisement should not have earlier made this branch his own, and developed it into amazing proportions. •

When he was with Garibaldi, he took care, as we have seen, to announce that the champagne which he opened for his guests on board the *Emma* was from the bins of *Folliet-Louis* and *Greno*. But a more ambitious attempt was a little work entitled "The Alchemist of the Nineteenth Century." which was an elaborate account of the electrotyping process introduced by one of his friends. Anything for cash! "Excursions in California" and other books of travel were brought to him; he wrote his name on the title-page, and the whole was disposed of for some wretched sum to a publisher. All this had the effect of depreciating the popularity even of the spirited romances which had made his name. • People grew sick of the repeated imposture, and of the very name of the great man. After his death, when his copyrights, or his share of them, were put up to sale, the whole brought some contemptible sum.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DEATH AND INTERMENT.

1870—1872.

IN this fashion the decay set in steadily. To the last he was ardent in the pursuit of pleasure. For pleasure he had lived; and age, he was determined, should make little difference in his habits. The result was a complete break-up of his strength and health, and a weakening of his mental faculties. "He continued," says his friend De Villemessant, "his irregular mode of life until the very moment that disease paralysed both his brain and his limbs."

When the disastrous war of 1870 broke out, and the enemy was fast closing in on Paris, it was determined that he should not be left in the city, to undergo the hardship of the siege. Attended by his daughter, he was brought to the station of the Western Railway, and assisted into one of the carriages. Those who recognised him saw that he was quite helpless, and almost unconscious of what was going

on about him. He was taken down to Puits, close to Dieppe, where his son had a small property, and where that son watched over him to the last with genuine filial tenderness. But the old epicurean had now lapsed into second childhood. The cannon thundered close by, the irresistible Germans were advancing on Dieppe itself. It was all over for him, and on the 5th of December that brilliant and romantic career was closed for ever.

He was interred on the eighth at Neuville, not far from Puits; and there, while the war raged and the capital was besieged and blockaded, and the armies on the north of the Loire were melting away, his remains were allowed to rest. When peace had been signed and something like calm and security had been restored to the distracted country, it was thought that the time was now come for removing the remains of the great story-teller to the little town of Villers-Cotterets, where he was born; and the 16th of April, 1872, was fixed for the ceremony. On the day before his son addressed the following letter to M. Darsonville, who lived in the town. Indeed, there is nothing more agreeable during these later stages of decaying life, waning respectability, and death, than the steady filial attention, the reserved but devoted affection, of this son. He wrote :—

"I shall leave Paris with the body on Monday, at seven o'clock in the evening. Be kind enough to give notice to the Curé and Commissary of Police of our arrival, which will be at about half-past nine o'clock. I shall stay the night at your house.

"On the following morning I shall venture to bring to you Messrs. Taylor, De Leuven, Dugué, Gonzalès, Mélingue, and Perrin, who are to be pall-bearers. There will be six in all.

"Madame Dumas and my children will stay at your house for a few minutes."

By ten o'clock at night the funeral party had reached Villers-Cotterets, and the remains of the brave old adventurer, after years of buffeting with fortune and many a weary mile of travel, were now brought back to the rustic little town whence he had set forth, a poor clerk, to seek fortune in Paris. He returned to the place even poorer than he had quitted it. A procession was formed from the railway station, the clergy leading the way, and a great crowd following the body. It was left in the church for that night.

At noon on the following day the church was filled. A train had come in from Paris bearing a great number of persons, all connected with art, literature, the press, and who were received by Alexander, the son. A solemn requiem mass was sung, and the

procession was formed to the graveyard. A musical society led the way chanting, then came the clergy and the body, attended by the pall-bearers just mentioned, with the exception of Mélingue, the actor, who could not attend, and whose place was taken by M. Charles Blanc. After them came Madame Petel, the daughter of the deceased, and Madame Dumas, his son's wife, supported on the arm of Protais, the painter. Then followed a deputation from the Society of Men of Letters, among whom was his old coadjutor Maquet, and such well-known men as De Najac, La Croix, Meilhac, author, with Halévy, of the pathetic "Frou-Frou" as well as of the boisterous "Grande Duchesse," Amédée Achard, Paul Bocage, Gustave Aimard, and others less known to fame. The actors also furnished a contingent: Régnier, the most finished of actors; Got, certainly the first comedian of Europe; Berton, and others; Carvalho, late manager of the Lyrique, husband to the most elegant of singers; Devisme, the gun-maker whose name Alexander was so fond of quoting, and whose gun he caused to perform prodigies of aim and carriage that would have amazed the maker; Emile de Girardin; Michel Lévy, the publisher and proprietor of many of his copyrights; Cham, the caricaturist, well known to be a clever amateur, the Vicomte de Noè; and the Comtesse

Dash, one of his old assistants, who has herself since passed away. This attendance was certainly a representative one, though it might have been wished that English letters had in some way been represented.

When the body was lowered into the grave, Dugué, who was deputed to represent the Society of Dramatic Authors, came forward and spoke a few words with some feeling, but in questionable taste. "We all loved him," he said, "he was so honest, so open, so good-natured. Opening his heart, even to weakness, with all the confidence of a child, he maintained no enmity, and could not refuse a request. The only person on earth to whom he could do harm was to himself. Brave old Dumas. It seems as if he was standing here among us all, with his fine head towering over the crowd, his frank smile, and his huge hand. And there is nothing fanciful in this idea, gentlemen. From the dark tomb yonder comes a ray of light. *D'Artagnan has triumphed over death. The master, who is so dear to us all, still lives in the son, who continues his work and swells his glory.*"

To this compliment succeeded other speeches. Then M. Charles Blanc came forward, "in the name of the Administrator of Fine Arts and of the Minister of Public Instruction," and declared that Dumas had always been thoroughly honest, that he had never sought to win

success by praising up "coquins," and that he always tried, in dealing with characters of fiction or of reality, to exalt what was chivalrous and gallant. There was some truth in this panegyric, though it must be said his types of "chivalry" were too often of a morbid sort.* An architect followed, who, to the great annoyance of the friends of the deceased, launched out into praises of Garibaldi.† Finally Alexander Dumas fils came forward and made a singularly grateful and effective oration.

"I cannot part from you, gentlemen," he said, "without giving an explanation, which my father's friends, and countrymen, and history itself, are entitled to ask for.

"Some of you were, no doubt, surprised that such an interval was allowed to elapse between his death and the removal of his remains to this spot, where he

* There is something almost grotesque in the "Ministry of Public Instruction" being represented at the grave of the author of "Antony" and "Teresa," works that had educated so many audiences. But this is only "thoroughly French." In the same way the "beau jeune homme" of the stage, who, when on a visit to a friend, is engaged in trying to corrupt his friend's wife, is a highly "chivalrous" object to the audiences who sympathise with the young fellow's gentle "sufferings" and noble sadness. This curious inversion is one of the many puzzles for the foreigner who tries to understand the French character.

† Considering that Dumas had been his bosom friend, and had made the Sicilian campaign with him, this was not so inappropriate. But it produced, we are told, an "*impression fâcheuse*," especially when the speaker came to "*faire l'éloge des idées républicaines*."

was born, and where he always fondly hoped to be laid. I say hoped, for he knew as well as we do, that in these excited days no one can reckon with certainty upon being put to rest in the place where he first opened his eyes. He died at my house on December 5th, 1870, with his family about him.

“How many others were at that moment giving up their souls with shrieks of despair and agony; left alone, with all the horrors of night and slaughter! We must thank God, then, for having granted him this last blessing, in addition to so many others. From that hour until the present eighteen months have passed away without my being able to carry out his wishes.

“The reason was this. Just two days before his death the department had been invaded by the enemy, as was the one in which we now are, and we were obliged to wait until the occupation came to an end. When the peace was signed the Prussians still remained here, waiting for their money. Had we fixed that time for these last rites, they would not have failed to insult our country once more, by escorting the remains to this place, and by trampling on the grave of the General who so often defeated their grandsires.

“At length they took their departure; but only at

the end of October. Then came the winter; a general depression was abroad in all hearts, and even in nature itself. The sun was chilly; the great forest here had been stripped of its leaves, and I wished that the illustrious dead should be brought back to you in the midst of light and flowers and general hope. I was anxious that this should have less the air of mourning than of a little fête, and that while entombing him associations of resurrection might fill our hearts. By some inspiration I was led to fix on this day, and you see how the spring has favoured me. What a sun! what fragrance! what a bright blue! what a host! How Death smiles on this happy beginning of immortality.

“I have, now, only to thank the people of Villers-Cotterets who turned out to join my father’s friends. Last night when we arrived we found them all waiting in the streets.

“This was a simple spontaneous movement, dictated by a wish to give a last mark of respect to this illustrious writer, who always loved the friends of his youth and his friends’ children. I saw both young and old contending with the bearers for the honour of carrying the body of their dear friend, and *then* I knew why it was he was so anxious to be laid among you. I have thereby contracted a debt of gratitude

which I shall bequeath to my children, just as my father bequeathes his to me at this moment; and this I can only barely indicate by an emotion which prevents me saying all that I should like to say."

This was a feeling, graceful, moderate address, that contrasts favourably with the harangues usually made on such occasions. All honour for it to Alexandre Dumas fils!

After this the crowd retired quietly and silently. The great novelist was now reposing, after his fitful life, in the graveyard to which his mother, more than half a century before, had so often led him, a little child, by the hand, when she paid her daily visit to her husband's grave.

CHAPTER XIX.

L'ENVOI.

THE reader who has pursued the story to this point will find it easy to draw the character of this remarkable man for himself. Though the course of such a being may be pronounced entertaining, and has excited many a hearty laugh, it must be confessed that, with his success and prestige, he has played a serious part in demoralising the tone of the public mind in France. The brutal and bestial exhibitions of passion have been continued in a steady line since the days of "Antony" and "Richard Darlington;" and though these subjects have been treated with more ingenuity by Sardou, Dumas Fils, Augier, and others, this difference is due chiefly to the sensual refinements of the Second Empire coming after the bourgeois plainness of the times of a citizen king. Dumas, as we have seen, was responsible for the introduction of the "trade" or "shop-keeping" element into a literature which he found passionate, genuine, vehement, and sincere. The "father

of humbug," he made humbug respectable, and under his teaching it now needs only to be successful, and even its victim is pleased. This is a heavy responsibility. He is said to have written or "arranged" some twelve hundred volumes: of all these there is only likely to survive that one romance of "*Monte Christo*," and his two plays, "*Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle*," and "*Un Mariage sous Louis XV.*"—a few planks after so vast a shipwreck—three volumes out of twelve hundred, just as, at the close of his life, he was left a halfpenny out of some hundred thousand pounds.

His own countrymen, since his death, have been strangely "incurious" of him, which might not seem surprising considering the serious matters they have on their hands. But, unhappily, the old game of lightness and pleasure seems in full swing, and there might have been room for a decent "*in memoriam*" of this most cheerful Epicurean, who so long led the song and dance. Nearly two years have passed away since, yet I have not been able to find in French reviews or magazines any deliberate estimate of a character, which, for good or evil, has exercised so marked an influence on its generation. One of the most accurate and nicely critical judgments of his character was to be given in an English journal, and I cannot do better than quote it here:—

“The literary career of Alexander Dumas was specially interesting to Englishmen for two reasons. He was, so far as we know, the only true quadroon, the only grandchild of a negro, the only man with woolly hair, and deficient calves, and black pigment in the creases of the joints of his fingers, who ever gained a considerable place in the literature of the world. Though quadroons have commanded armies and governed States, and issued, of course, many proclamations, no other of the race has ever achieved literary eminence. Dumas was the grandson of the Marquis de la Pailletterie and a negro mistress, bore all the marks of his origin, never shrank from avowing it, and avoided visiting the United States, which he had a great desire to see, from fear of the insults to which, as he believed, his connection with the despised people would expose him. We cannot say his genius was of the quadroon type, there being so few examples of quadroon genius, but we can say it was of the type observers like Mrs. Stowe have always expected the race to produce,—a type in which the predominating feature is the blaze of colour. It was not Oriental exactly, but it certainly was tropical. Its defect was rankness, over-luxuriance, splendour of colour without corresponding solidity or sweetness, a tendency to profusion without reference to the quality of the supply

so abundantly poured out. Flowers or weeds, oaks or trees looking like oaks and rotten as touchwood, every product of Dumas's pen bewildered the spectator by the waste of power which it appeared only too truly to indicate. Dumas would crowd into a chapter incidents which might make a novel, and half of which had no bearing on the story; create characters by the dozen only to kill them off; exhaust patience in painting a hero, and still more a heroine, by an infinitude of touches, half of which were repetitions; while of the remainder many were rather poises with the brush, leaving the idea that he would touch, than actual touches. Without the faintest gleam of spiritual feeling, unless we seek it in the undertone of Monte Christo, that Providence is wiser than the wisest man, he had a passion for introducing the supernatural or quasi-supernatural, as a machinery which relieved him at once of the trouble of minutely painting character and of making his incidents reasonably probable. That he could create is undeniable,—most of his smaller figures are true creations; but just try to make out, apart from the machinery, what he took the Cagliostro to be, who under many names is the hero of so many of his tales; or what, to take a more familiar example, he meant by his delineation of Monte Christo or of Henry IV., the latter not a

character at all, but a mixture of two almost incompatible natures, with no clue to their point of contact. He was tropical, too, in his atmosphere, with its bright lights, and clear outlines, and sense of heat *not* arising from strain, and gorgeousness which escapes analysis; tropical in the intensity he gives to his characters—intensity which is sometimes force, as in Nortier, sometimes weakness, as in Edmond Dantès himself, and, as we think, in Joseph Balsamo; tropical in the scale of his conceptions; tropical, most of all, in the kind of immorality which pervades his books. They are not immoral often in the sense in which that word is usually applied to French novels.

“ We do not pretend to have read all the forty novels he is said to have given to the world, or half of them; but in the nine or ten we have read Dumas is not so much immoral, or prurient, or unclean,—the latter he did not, we conceive, intend to be,—as indifferent to immutable right and wrong, capable of accepting any kind of law which occurred to him as the one governing that series of situations. His history, for instance,—for he meant it to be history,—of the relation of Margaret of Valois to Henry of Navarre is, if tried by any standard recognized in England, an evil, though not an unclean book. It would be impossible to give any description of the plot which would not leave an in-

nately deeper impression of impurity than the novel itself does. *Yet the probability is that Dumas thought he was rather carefully avoiding the impure, rejecting strong temptations towards the sensational as France understands it; and it is possible to comprehend why he so imagined. He had caught the tone of the Valois Court, its fundamental idea that there was no law for princes other than to be princely; that in particular the Sixth and Seventh Commandments were rules highly expedient for the community, but of no meaning whatever for a 'Child of France;' and wrote under those conditions as a historiographer of the court might have done, with infinite less intention to injure or debauch anybody than Margaret herself would have displayed. The anecdote-mongers, who in the East are called historians, write just like that, and so do the poets; and it is curious to find the same temper, the same want of incisiveness of moral vision, the same disposition to accept all acts as acts, having little reference to character, in the great French quadroom.

"The other point of interest about M. Dumas is that he wrote a book which, with the exception of 'Paul and Virginia,' is probably the only French novel yet written which will live as an English one. Since the 'Arabian Nights,' there has been nothing like 'Monte

Christo ;' no such revel of improbabilities, no such fandango of absurdities, and no book which, to those who can enjoy the 'Arabian Nights,' who can bear to be released from the laws of the universe, who care nothing about likelihood, and are incurious about character, loving to 'see the people' as girls see a review or men a great spectacle, has been so enchanting as the history of the low Southern sailor who makes of himself gentleman, millionaire, earthly Providence, and goes through the world supporting the right and punishing the wrong by sheer volition ; who, though intent for years on a black scheme of private revenge, is as gentle and holy as an apostle ; who, living in unimaginable luxury, is a self-restrained anchorite ; who, tropical to his toes in habits, beliefs, ways, is through it all the last highest product of European cultivation. Dumas has taken little pains, or rather none, to make us understand Edmond Dantès in his second phase. He has not troubled himself to account for the middle passage of his career, the period between his rescue from prison and his appearance as the Count, though in the interim he had rescued Haidée and seen all the world. He has not even condescended to be consistent in his account of his machine for performing wonders, the Count's vast wealth, for which he gives him originally some £800,000,

he allows him towards the end three letters of unlimited credit from houses like Rothchilds', and makes him perform extravagances to which his very moderate means for our modern society would be totally inadequate. And yet with what eagerness does one read of his rise, his grandeurs, his vengeance, and his repentance as he passes on his way through that ever-varying succession of incidents, and among that host of living people. The secret of the charm is not in the incidents, for, apart from their gross improbability, Dumas has depicted many as lively in novels which will almost instantly be consigned to the butterman; nor in the characters, for men and women as real and as original overflow in his stories; nor in his style, for in many chapters of 'Monte Christo' it is not at his best, is occasionally so far from it as to lend colour to the report that even in this, his most characteristic work, he was assisted by his pupils. It is not a story of passion, save so far as Dantès' hunger for revenge may be called passion, and the only love-story it contains is idyllic in its purity, and when told scarcely amounts to more than an incident; and yet we should like to try with the book some grave hater of novels, or—a far harder trial—some lover of mental analysis. We believe the secret of its success is the deep, full gratification Dumas gives to one of the strongest

weaknesses of human nature, the passion of Aladdinism, the desire to realise day-dreams by volition. Edmond Dantès acts as men might act were their secret, disjointed, useless fancies executive. He finds the royal road to knowledge for which we all sigh. He gains the social influence of all kinds for which we do not even hope. He acquires at a blow the wealth beyond the dreams of avarice which we all should think so pleasant. He finds the silent, devoted, yet willing agents of his will, who in the ordinary world can be secured only by kings and the leaders of men ; and he, above all, secures to every incident of his career that dramatic completeness on which men ponder when they give the rein to reflection on the past. We enjoy that realization of day-dreaming, that world in which obstacles are not, or exist only to enhance the pleasure of their removal, in which there are many Genii of the Lamp, and one controls them all. Dumas himself, like every man of his race, had this imaginative dreaminess, this love for the concrete unreal in his blood ; he revels and riots in his own imaginings, and it is a curious evidence of our view of his character, of the superficiality of the evil in it, that in this book, in which, of all others, he is least restrained by any ties, in which he gives freest rein to his inner self, he rises to his moral best, shakes him-

self totally free of uncleanness, conceives the character of the Abbé Faria, which is worthy to stand by that of Bishop Myriel, gives in the shipowner's family a fine picture of nobleness without ineptitude, and, as it were unconsciously, or in his own despite, graves deep his ultimate moral—that in seeking revenge, however terrible the provocation, however lawful the means in the spirit of revenge, man does throughout but strive to be wiser than his God.” *

Beside this it will be interesting to place the yet more delicate appreciation of a Frenchman, an extract from one of M. Chasles' Lectures, hitherto unpublished :—

“Fils du xix. siècle, méridional jusqu'à la moelle, enfant naïf, géant sensuel, presque Africain, *Dumas* vivait sans idéal et n'en mettait aucun dans ses livres ; ou plutôt il en avait un, un seul, le mouvement. C'est bien assez. Car le mouvement est identique à la chaleur. Et celle-ci est la vie physique. Ce talent extraordinaire, génie nègre, puissant, abondant, tout physique, ardent et mobile, n'avait pas besoin de créer une œuvre. Il échauffait tout ce qu'il rencontrait. Un Protestant réfugié à Rotterdam avait imprimé, vers 1700, dans cette ville, trois mauvais petits volumes glacés, d'une invention assez heureuse,

* *Spectator*, Dec. 17, 1870.

diffus et vulgaire de style. Dumas en a fait la divertissante ' Histoire des Trois Mousquetaires.' Vous lui apportiez un récit quelconque, un sujet, bien ou mal traité, l'étonnant artiste jettait la pâte dans son four, d'où, en peu de minutes, elle ressortait cuite et très-savoureuse. Si vous ajoutez à cette naturelle ardeur cérébrale, l'habileté pour ainsi dire manuelle la plus merveilleuse, les finesses du métier, les subtilités vite apprises, point de scrupules dans les emprunts, une extraordinaire rapidité de conception et d'adaptation, vous arrivez à comprendre la formation génétique de ce prodige, vous comprenez ce prodigue, qui prenait à pleines mains, versant à pleines mains et à pleines corbeilles, sans y regarder ; arrangeant ses écrits comme sa vie ;—cuisinier à Naples ; capitaine de frégate quand vous voudrez ; architecte au besoin ; faisant de bons vers ; n'ayant jamais de plagiats sur sa conscience, ni de dettes financières sur son calepin ; car tout ce qu'il prenait aux autres, il le restituait à quelqu'un sous forme éclatante ; et tout le passif de son budget devenait son actif. Le *Passif* d'ailleurs lui était aussi inconnue que l'*Actif*. Je crois qu'il a signé un millier d'ouvrages, drames et romans. On lui a reproché amèrement d'en avoir volé la moitié. Cela n'est pas vrai. Le Four lui appartenait. De quelque côté que put venir la pâte, tant qu'il ne l'avait pas

pétrée, arrangée, vernie et surveillée, elle n'avait aucune valeur ; il corrigeait le moule, refondait les éléments et soignait la cuisson. Une comédie, 'Les Demoiselles de St. Cyr,' qui a dépassé sa centième représentation, n'était, en tombant entre ses mains, qu'un petit vaudeville assez informe, que son auteur vendit cinquante francs prix débattu.

" Il était spirituel, poète, manufacturier, ingénieur, tout à la fin. Qui l'a vu vivant, et il y a peu de temps que nous l'avons perdu, s'explique la création et le développement d'un phénomène si étrange. Sa taille était haute, la structure vigoureuse, l'œil à fleur de tête et jovial, la bouche railleuse et forte, la lèvre épaisse et le front plutôt arrondi comme chez les femmes, que très-élevé comme chez Platon et Leibnitz. La chevelure crépue et robuste. Non seulement l'Asiatique, mais l'Africain éclatait en lui. Un seul nom peut être rapproché de son nom ; celui de Lope Véga, l'Espagnol. On ne lit plus rien de ce grand *Lope*. Mais il y a encore une forte lueur de gloire, une flamme vive, et une magie sur sa tombe. Les bibliothèques renferment des milliers d'œuvres qui portent son nom, —je ne veux pas dire son cachet ! Ces fécondités infinies et immenses ne peuvent être originales que par leur fécondité même.

· " ' *Mostruo di natura*, génie énorme,' disaient les

contemporains en parlant de *Lope* ! On peut en dire autant de Dumas. Lope méprisait sincèrement Cervantes, et disait de Don Quichotte, que ce n'était bon qu'à '*couvrir le poivre et la cannelle*.' Lope, bon catholique, bon Castillan, familier du Saint-Office, se vantait de n'avoir jamais blessé la morale et l'État.

"Comme Lope, Dumas se vantait aussi d'avoir respecté la Morale et honoré le Pouvoir. Cet étonnant conteur dit quelque part que 'ses sept ou huit cents tomes ne contiennent pas la valeur de deux volumes nuisibles, indécens ou immoraux.' D'abord, a-t-il écrit huit cents volumes ? Oui, et plus que cela. Des hommes robustes font quinze lieues par jour ; en s'y habituant, ils accomplirent aisément le tour du globe terrestre. Dumas était de ceux-là. Physiquement et intellectuellement il était le robuste par excellence ; et cette transformation de l'écrivain en artisan, du poète en manœuvre, par sa volonté propre et celle du public, est un des signes les plus notables de la Psychologie sociale actuelle de la France. Cela faisait frissonner le subtil Sainte-Beuve, le sophiste délicat, de voir la littérature ainsi traitée, comme de la charpente ou du défrichement.

"J'admets donc que Dumas ait publié mille volumes ; je l'admets volontiers, facilement. Ce phénomenal artisan se mettait à l'œuvre dès l'aurore, coura-

geusement, manches retroussées, plume à la main, riant, chantant, disant de grosses paroles et de bons mots, recevant ses amis, fécond du lazzis, prêtant de l'argent,—même celui de ses amis ; prêtant souvent le sien ; ouvrant son Four, y jettant sa pâte, et celle des autres, quelquefois celle de *Schiller* ou de *Goethe*, ou celle de Retif de la Brétonne, indifféremment. Toujours sûr du succès, jamais les chalands ne lui manquaient. Tout était cuit à point ; et ces gateaux jetés dans son moule, nous les avons tous trouvés délicieux.

“ De la Pâtisserie ! Voilà (direz-vous) une étrange littérature ! Elle fait descendre et diminuer un peuple ! Certes ! sans doute. Une nourriture pareille ne fortifie point. Les intelligences les plus vigoureuses y succombent. Un peuple accoutumé à ce régime, ne médite plus, ne pense plus, ne se rend plus compte de rien, n'analyse plus rien. Devenu paresseux à penser, il languit dans cette habitude d'esprit, il s'y acroupit. Quand vient ensuite l'heure fatale, l'heure des révolutions, où sont les hommes ? Il n'y en a plus ! on les cherche ! Les lecteurs assidus ‘d'Aramis’ et de ‘Porthos’ deviennent de faux ‘Aramis’ et de faux ‘Porthos.’ Les innombrables lecteurs de ‘Monte Christo’ ne rêvent plus que richesses illusoires, Pactoles inespérés ; Eldorados gigantesques, s’énivrent de

chimères, cherchent un peu d'or dans les ruines et s'évanouissent enfin, sous la Commune de 1871, au milieu des cendres du pays saccagé et des palais détruits.

“ Il ne faut point blâmer Dumas, Eugène Sue, Frédéric Soulié, ni leurs successeurs plus grossiers. Nous les avons faits ce qu'ils ont dû être ; ils nous ont rendu la pareille. Ils ont préparé la génération indifférente au bien et au mal, qui, acceptant l'Empire (le second), n'a pas su le détourner du Mexique, de la dernière guerre et des derniers désastres ; et qui peut être (Dieu puisse nous préserver de cela!) indifférente encore au sort du pays, toujours assoupie, toujours chimérique, et ne songeant qu'à l'intérêt égoïste, et aux manœuvres de ces partis, ira l'achever dans le dernier abîme, le faisant rouler du roc Napoléonien, aux gouffres rouges, pour tomber dans les puits marécageux des abîmes blancs et là, expirer, risée de l'Europe ! Dieu nous en préserve !

“ Les peuples qui n'ont demandé à leurs conteurs que des amusements sans moralité, n'ont pas pu vivre longtemps ; ni les Bouddhistes qui nagent dans le roman le plus étrange ; ni l'Italie de Boccace, de 'l'Arétin' et des 'Novellieri,' ni l'Espagne des romans chevaleresques. C'est contre ces fictions que Cervantes a pris la plume. Il avait raison. Quand

tout un populaire fait sa Bible des 'Amadis' ou des 'Mousquetaires' d'Alexandre Dumas, il est perdu. La parole de vie devient une parole de sommeil et de mort, surtout chez les races dont l'éducation est mauvaise ou nulle. Plus d'un Français n'a, dans ces derniers temps, appris l'histoire de France que dans les faciles et chimériques récits d'Alexandre Dumas.

"De là, une grande et générale colère en France contre les moralistes, contre ceux qui ne flattent pas l'humanité. De là aussi un dégoût de la vie sérieuse. Ne blâmons pas, je le repète, ce grand enfant de génie . . . il a rendu avec intérêt à son siècle ce que son siècle lui avait prêté. . . . "

This discriminating judgment the reader will see bears out the view adopted in these volumes. On the whole, Dumas must be counted among those pleasant entertainers of the world whose proceedings are considered to be privileged. It is hard to part with him, harder still to be severe upon his tricks and follies. We are even tempted to adopt M. Charles's plea, and hold that the cook should have all the credit, and not the person who brings him the food to cook. It is hard to have to add, that his own countrymen were at last not inclined to be so indulgent.

For his later days was reserved an *exposé* of a literary piracy, which surpassed in daring all his

previous plunderings. He had contrived to found another journal called *Le Caucase*, in which he proposed to give an account of his travels in that region. He was no longer the rich, dazzling, and privileged Dumas; he was grown old, and almost as bankrupt in respectability as in pocket. The community, therefore, was not inclined to be indulgent to spoliations which they had once found so amusing. He was brought before a police court, on the charge of having appropriated the book of one Merlieux, "*Les Souvenirs d'une Française*," and, having issued it as his own.* No mercy was shown him. He was sentenced to a fine of 100 francs, to pay 500 francs damages, to the confiscation of the whole impression, to the publication of the sentence in the papers, and to six months' imprisonment!

Volumes might be filled with stories of his pleasant absurdity; all proving that there was little affectation about him, and that he was perfectly sincere in these exhibitions. How exquisite his circular to the French priests of the department when he was coming forward as a candidate for the Assembly:—

"REVEREND SIR,—If there be among modern writers one who has defended religion, proclaimed

* The prosecutor declared that the *Edinburgh Review* had offered him fifty pounds for a "translation that was to appear in their columns."

the immortality of the soul, and exalted the Christian faith, you will do me the justice to admit that I am the man. I propose to come forward as candidate for the Assembly. If elected, I shall support respect for holy things, and first in the rank of holy things I have always placed religion. I hold that *spiritual nourishment* is as necessary to man as corporal food."

This was genuine, for he *had* a devotional sentiment after his own fashion, just as he had the sentiment of romance and a dozen other sentiments. So, too, when there was any work of "sensational" charity, which took the shape of a scene on the stage, he was in the front in a moment, ready with tears and fine language, and, it must be said, with cash when he had it. How delicious was his proposed mode of aiding a gallant sailor who had saved life at Havre.

"By working some ten or twelve hours a day, and perhaps because I *do* work ten or twelve hours a day, I have lost many precious moments in my life. These moments are those when the weary brain requires a moment's rest. Still during this interval the fingers can work; they can trace, mechanically as it were, lines, maxims, sentences. Say there are a thousand collectors who would give twopence halfpenny a line, there we have ten pounds made for the first ten poor wretches who come to me for charity.

“Should I not be proud if 400,000 autographs of mine were sold at twopence halfpenny each? Should I not be happy if, for the few years left to me, I could indulge myself in the princely luxury of distributing 4000*l.* in charity!

“But how unlucky that we did not think of this before; I could have *written a million autographs—but God only allows me time to do the four hundred thousand*,—so I comfort myself with that. Taking it at a hundred a day, I would want just eleven years for the task. However, notice is hereby given to collectors that, from the 24th of July next—my birthday—100 autographs a day are at their service.”

This address to the priests, and this specimen of his charity, show the true character of all his actions. Sentiment, romance, were his guiding impulses. The unreality, the theatrical character of his actions has been already pointed out. All through his life he was confounding what was “sensational” with what was great. There are few traces left of his vast operations—the twelve hundred volumes, the grand theatre, the castles dilapidated, “the wet coming in at the roof before it was finished,” the great factory, the fuss and patter which attended his progress—these have all passed away like a vapour. Rather like some grand fairy piece, with its “décors” and “femmes suspendues,” which all Paris

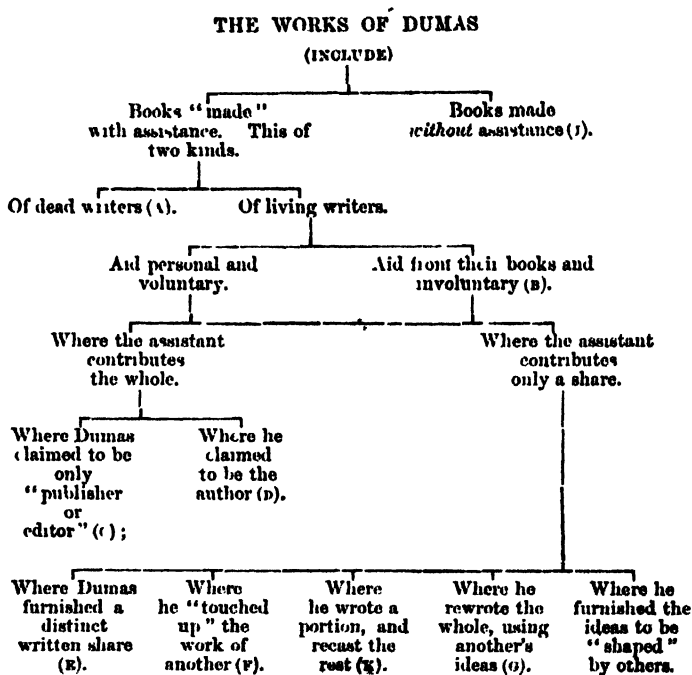
was crowding to see ten years ago. By this time the splendid scenes are painted over, the dresses cut up, the actors that convulsed or delighted audiences dead or scattered, the "femmes suspendues" grown too plain or stout to be "suspendues" any longer. There just remains the barren recollection that a great spectacle had dazzled the town and brought in money.

CHAPTER XX.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.

To give a detailed account of the fantastic tricks that Alexander Dumas performed with books, and show the many Protean shapes he could assume on paper, allot to him and his assistants their proper share in these compositions, would be a task scarcely entertaining for the general reader, though it would interest the bibliographer. There are some amusing difficulties in the way; and the most laborious inquirer, such as was the late M. Quérard, would soon find himself groping, bewildered, among the perplexing shapes of *soi-disant* authorship which it pleased the great speculator to assume with so much ingenuity. The following might be taken as a rough outline of the division and subdivision of these labours, and it will be seen what principles of minute analysis would have to be imported into the inquiry.

His works would have to be classified something after this fashion :—



This table becomes in itself a curiosity when we consider that all the divisions to the reader's left represent his *assisted* labours, which were virtually all his labours; while the meagre little category to the right, "books written without assistance," the criterion of ordinary authorship, would be represented by only half-a-dozen entries. With some trouble, all his works

could be thus classified; but it may suffice to give a specimen of each; A is represented by "Henri III.;" B by "Gaule et France," the spoliated being Hugo, Châteaubriand, etc.; C, "Travels in California;" D, "Les Deux Diane," "Fernande," etc. etc.; E, "Le Corricolo," "Ange Pitou," etc.; F is represented by a large class, but G stands for what was really his favourite mode of composition, namely, where the piece was brought to him written, and he exercised his powers in rewriting it. But in class J, where he fulfilled the condition of ordinary authorship, viz., writing the book himself, there is literally nothing save one or two efforts of his boyhood, crude and forgotten ones. It is almost droll that one reputed to be the most prolific writer should be reduced to the measure of a mere juvenile performance; for thus the most popular of authors becomes no more than the overseer of a great workshop, with no other duty than to see that the manufacture was carried on briskly.

Of his numerous plays, a sort of rough classification might be attempted. Thus "Henri III.," "Christine," "Don Juan," and "Charles VII.,"* belonged to class A; "Antony," "Richard Darlington,"

* This is the statement of Quérard, but Jacquot declares in the most positive manner that Charles VII. was handed to Dumas complete by Gautier and De Nerval.

"Teresa," "Angela," the "Tour de Nesle," to K; "Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle," the "Mariage sous Louis Quinze," and the "Démousselles de St. Cyr," to C. The large balance of some forty or fifty dramas standing under his name, belong entirely to class D, he contributing nothing but his name to the bills. His chief assistant in this department was Anicet Bourgeois, and after Bourgeois the pair, Léon Lhérie and De Leuven, who, during the last five and twenty years of his life, seemed to have furnished to order any play he desired, and to which his name was duly attached with theirs. Emile Souvestre, Beudin, and Goubaux, Lassagne and Rousseau, Durrien, Gaillardet, Théaulon, Nezel and Labrunie, Lafont, Philippe, Meurice, Octave Feuillet, were his chief dramatic collaborators. Maquet's was a special position, being the dramatiser of the great romances, "Monte Christo," "Les Mousquetaires," "Chevalier de Maison Rouge," "La Reine Margot," and the like; the process being the simple cutting out of the novel, and skilfully fitting together in tableaux, whole pages of dialogue, which are indeed far more brilliant than any average stage dialogue. With his novels the same rough classification may answer. Said to be the author of over a thousand volumes, all that can be placed to his credit under class J, as his own unassisted work, shrinks into three

or four magazines, novelettes, and some historical essays in a review. These are "Les Nouvelles Contemporaines," his "Elegy on General Foy," and the like. His autobiographical chapters and "chats" are no more than mere familiar letters, addressed to the public instead of a friend. This is a humiliating result for so vast an *entrepreneur*. For the mass of his novels his process was simple enough, he either bought any suitable story that was offered to him (more often *contracting* to buy it, for the price was not always forthcoming), and affixed his name to it; or accepted a translation from the German or English. His transactions with Maquet have been already dealt with, and it has been shown that though Maquet may have written and arranged most of the important stories which made Dumas's reputation, still the latter's spirit and direction which inspired each narrative, as it appeared from day to day in the feuilleton, was sufficient to confer the credit of authorship. And because what were admitted to be the most successful and interesting of the works—"Monte Christo," "Les Mousquetaires," with the continuations, "Vingt Ans Après," and "Le Vicomte de Bragelonne,"—the "Dame de Monsoreau," "Chevalier de Maison Rouge," "Balsamo," "Ange Pitou," and others of the same kind—were connected with the labours of Maquet,

while in those which were dull and unpopular he had no share, it was assumed the successful tales were Maquet's work alone. The truth was that he was exactly suited to Dumas; and the "complement" that rapid and impulsive genius. He could seize the ideas which Dumas poured out so rapidly—could work them up as the master himself would have done had he patience or time, and could make the language assume the dramatic forms which were working in impalpable shape in the brain of his chief. And this seems to explain the whole consistently. When Dumas lost Maquet he became helpless; there was no one whom he could fill with his spirit, or who could give them the shape he desired. And when Maquet separated from Dumas he lost inspiration, direction—the incomparably skilful workman was left, who could turn out only tame and spiritless stories. This "dictation of ideas" for another to put in shape was something like the work of an improvisatore. It stands for a respectable portion of his labours, and can be placed in class L. Some revelations connected with a quarrel with the Bibliophile Jacob shows him reversing the process. This writer, says De Mirecourt, proposed the subject of a grand romance, "*Les Mille et un Fantômes*," and used to come every day with notes and "ideas" for each incident, which his

principal proceeded to work out. But the latter, it is said, presently grew tired of this laborious process, and required the assistance to be of a more complete and substantial sort. It would take half a volume, however, to pursue him through these ingeniously-assumed shapes of authorship, or to show how each of these stories was either bought, stolen, translated, cut down, enlarged, altered, disfigured, improved, arranged—written in his own words from other men's "ideas"—written in other men's language from his *own* ideas; in short, under every conceivable condition, save the ordinary accepted one.

We shall now proceed to give a tolerably full list of various works that bear his name.*

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1825. <i>Élégie sur la Mort du Général Foy.</i>
<i>La Chasse et l'Amour.</i> | 1832. <i>Térésa</i> (drama).
<i>Le Mari de la Veuve</i> (drama).
<i>La Tour de Nesle</i> (drama).
<i>Le Fils de l'Emigré</i> (drama). |
| 1826. <i>Canaris</i> (dithyrambe).
<i>La Noce et l'Enterrement</i> (drama).
<i>Nouvelles Contemporaines.</i> | 1833. <i>Angèle</i> (drama).
<i>Gaule et France.</i>
<i>Impressions de Voyage.</i> |
| 1829. <i>Henri III. et sa Cour</i> (drama).
<i>La Cour du Roi Pétard</i> (drama). | 1834. <i>La Vénétienne</i> (drama).
<i>Catherine Howard</i> (drama).
<i>La Tour de Babel</i> (drama). |
| 1830. <i>Stockholm, Fontainebleau et Rome</i> (drama). | 1835. <i>Isabelle de Bavière, ou Règne de Charles VI.</i>
<i>Souvenirs d'Antony.</i>
<i>Chroniques de France.</i> |
| 1831. <i>Napoléon</i> (drama).
<i>Antony</i> (drama).
<i>Charles VII. chez ses grand Vassaux</i> (drama).
<i>Richard Darlington</i> (drama). | 1836. <i>Le Marquis de Brunoy</i> (drama). |

* Quérard's did not go beyond the year 1848. The one given in Vapereau's Dictionary is not by any means complete. I have supplemented both from the collection in the British Museum, from Goizet's brochure already quoted, Jacquot, and many other sources.

- Don Juan de Marana (drama).
 Kean (drama).
 1837. Piquillo (opéra comique).
 1838. La Salle d'Armes.
 Le Capitaine Paul.
 Quinze Jours au Sinai.
 Caligula (drama).
 Paul Jones (drama).
 1839. Les Crimes Célèbres.
 Actè.
 La Comtesse de Salisbury.
 Jacques Ortis.
 Bathilde (drama).
 Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle
 (drama).
 L'Alchimiste (drama).
 Leo Burckhart (drama).
 Napoléon (drama).
 1840. Aventures de John Davys.
 Le Capitaine Pamphile.
 Jarvis (drama).
 Othon l'Archer.
 Maître Adam le Calabrais.
 La Salle d'Armes.
 Pauline et Pascal Bruno.
 Le Maître d'Armes.
 Les Stuarts.
 1841. Excursion sur les bords du
 Rhin.
 Une Année à Florence.
 Nouvelles Impressions de Voyage.
 Un Mariage sous Louis XV
 (drama).
 Joanne le Breton (drama).
 Praxède.
 La Chasse au Chastre.
 Armée Française.
 1842. Lorenzino (drama).
 Le Séducteur et le Mari (drama).
 Halifax (drama).
 Jehanne la Pucelle.
 Aventures de Lydéric.
 Le Capitaine Arén.
 Sur la Mort de S. A. R. Mgr. le
 Duc d'Orléans.

- Le Corricolo.
 Le Speronare.
 1843. Le Mariage au Tambour
 (drama).
 Les Demoiselles de Saint Cyr
 (drama).
 Louise Bernard (drama).
 Le Laird de Dumbicky (drama).
 Albine.
 Le Chevalier d'Harmental.
 Georges.
 Filles, Lorettes, et Courtisanes.
 Ascanio.
 La Villa Palmieri.
 Un Alchimiste au XIX^{me} Siècle.
 1844. Sylvandire.
 Les Trois Mousquetaires.
 Le Château d'Eppstein.
 Amaury.
 Cécile.
 Gabriel Lambert.
 La Comtesse de Bouillie.
 Le Comte de Monte Christo.
 Histoire d'un Casse-Noisette.
 Fernande.
 Simples Lettres sur l'Art dra-
 matique.
 Louis XIV et son Siècle.
 1845. Une Fille du Régent.
 La Reine Margot.
 Les Médicis.
 La Guerre des Femmes.
 Une Amazone.
 Les Frères Corses.
 Le Garde Forestier (drama).
 Une Conte de Fées (drama).
 Sylvandire (drama).
 Les Mousquetaires (drama).
 Nanon de Lartignes.
 Madame de Condé.
 La Vicomtesse de Camber.
 1846. Mémoires d'un Médecin.
 Le Chevalier de Maison Rouge.
 Echec et Mât (drama).
 Une Fille du Régent (drama).

- Shakespeare et Dumas (drama)
(unpublished).
La Dame de Monsoreau.
Le Batard de Mauléon.
Les Deux Diane.
Michel Ange.
Temple et Hospice du Mont
Carmel.
L'Abbaye de Peyzac.
Galerie de Florence.
- 1846 to 1850. Les Quarante-cinq.
Révélations sur l'arrestation
de Thomas.
Les Mariages du Père Olifus.
La Régence.
Le Collier de la Reine.
Monte Christo (drama).
La Jeunesse des Mousquetaires
(drama).
La Guerre des Femmes (drama).
Le Comte Herman (drama).
Urbain Grandier (drama).
Louis XV.
Dieu dispose.
La Chasse au Chastro (drama).
- 1851 to 1854. Le Trou d'Enfer.
Louis XVI.
Dramas de Quatre-vingt treize.
Le dernier Roi des Français.
Conscience.
Le Gil-Blas en Californie.
Olympe.
Les Dramas de la Mer.
Isaac Laquedem.
Le Pasteur d'Ashbourn.
Causeries d'un Voyageur.
Les Mohicans de Paris.
Une Vie d'Artiste.
La Princesse de Monaco.
La Barrière de Clichy (drama).
Romulus (drama).
Le Marbrier (drama).
La Conscience (drama).
L'Orestie (drama).
Histoire des deux Siècles.
1855. La Tour St. Jacques.
Ingénue.
Le Page du Duc de Savoie.
Pèlerinage de Hadji-Bey.
Journal de Madame Giovanni.
L'Invitation à la Valse (comédie).
1856. Mémoires d'un jeune Cadet.
La Peinture chez les Anciens.
Mémoires du Madame du Deffant.
1857. Les Compagnons de Jehu.
1858. Le Chasseur de Sauvagine.
L'Histoire de Savoie.
Les Louves de Macheoul.
1859. Le Caucase.
L'Art et les Artistes.
1860. Les Mémoires d'Horace.
Les Mémoires de Garibaldi.
L'Envers d'une Conspiration
(drama).
Le Gentilhomme de la Montagne
(drama).
Souvenirs d'une Favorite.
1861. Le Prisonnier de la Bastille
(drama).
Monsieur Coumbes.
1863. La San Félice.
Les Bleus, &c.
1865. Bouts rimés.
1868. Madame de Chamblay.
Les Baleiniers.
Black.
La Bouillie de la Comtesse Berthe.
Boule de Neige.
Bric-à-Brac.
Un Cadet de Famille.
Le Capitaine Richard.
Catherine Blum.
Causeries.
Cécile.
Charles le Téméraire.
La Comtesse de Charny.
Les Confessions de la Marquise.
Dieu dispose (drama).
La Femme au Collier de Velours.
L'Horoscope.

L'Arabie Heureuse.
De Paris à Cadix.
Les grands Hommes en robe de chambre.
Italiens et Flamands.
Ivanhoe de Walter Scott (traduction).
Jane.
La Maison de Glace.
Mes Mémoires.
Le Meneur de Loups.
Les Mille et un Fautômes.
Les Morts vont vite.
Napoléon.
Une Nuit à Florence.

Le Père Gigogne.
Le Père la Ruine.
La Princesse Flora.
-Les Quarante-Cinq.
La Route de Varennes.
Le Salteador.
Salvator (suite et fin des Mohicans de Paris).
Sultanetta.
Le Testament de M. Chauvelin
Trois Maîtres.
Le Vicomte de Bragelonne.
La Vie au Désert.
Vingt Ans après.*

But we now come to yet another department, where his diligence was exhibited in an incredible degree. There was hardly a magazine or review but could exhibit some contribution from his pen. These were of all kinds, from the *Revue des Deux Mondes* to the poorest sheet that did not live beyond the second number. Here are some of these productions :—

L'Artiste ; Chefs-d'œuvre des Écrivains du Jour ; Les Sensitives ; La Psyche ; La Grande Ville ; Le Dodecaton ; La Galerie des Femmes de, Walter Scott ; Le Keepsake Français ; L'Italie Pittoresque ; Le Plutarque Français ; Le Royal Keepsake ; Le Bibliothèque des Romans

Nouveaux ; Le Courrier des Lecteurs ; Le Livre des Conteurs ; L'Album de la Mode ; Le Prisme ; Le Journal des Connaissances utiles ; La Sylphide ; Le Journal des Demoiselles ; La Revue de Paris ; La Revue des Deux Mondes ; Paris et les Parisiens ; Nouveau Magasin des Enfants.

To another department belonged those letters, pre-

* One of the difficulties in dealing with this bibliographical inquiry is the impossibility of fixing the date of appearance of many of his works, owing to the different *shapes* in which they came out.

faces, introductions, which he would supply to the work of some feeblér *confrère*—of course for a consideration; though sometimes, where his vanity was to be ministered to, he would content himself with *that* remuneration. The following list does not include one half of these productions:—

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1858. Cléopâtre (par E. D'Araguey ;
préface par A. Dumas). | Du Couret, avec notice biographique par A. Dumas. |
| 1855. Le Soleil (par A. Badère ; préface par A. D.). | 1852. Quentin Matsys (translation, E. Carlen). |
| 1864. Tonton Tontaine par Bertrand (préface par A. Dumas). | 1857. Haiti, Californie—Journal de Madame Giovanni, rédigé et publié par A. Dumas. |
| 1870. Les Amours d'un Idiot (par Chadenil ; préface par A. Dumas). | 1847. Grisier, les Armes et le Duel (préface par A. Dumas). |
| 1865. Demougeot (Jacques Burke, drame; préface par A. Dumas). | 1864. Paris pour les Marins (précédé d'une lettre de Alex. Dumas). |
| 1854. Voyage au Pays des Niam-Niam. | 1867. Revoil, Histoire des Chiens (préface par A. Dumas). |

There only remain his various newspapers, which contain a vast amount of his familiar and "epistolary" writing. These included a journal devoted to architecture (!), directed by Alexander Dumas.

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| La Propriété. | Le Monte Christo. |
| Le Mois. | Le Mousquetaire. |
| La France Nouvelle. | Le Mousquetaire (revived). |
| La Liberté. | Le Caucase. |

Such were the "works" of this surprising man.

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"The moment the two volumes came to hand we sat down to their consideration, and did not leave them until we had devoured their contents, each chapter, like jealousy, increasing 'the meat' on which we 'fed' without satisfying our appetite inasmuch as, when we had come to the end, we were eagerly inclined—like poor Oliver Twist in Dickens's admirable novel—to ask for more."—*Bell's Weekly Messenger*.

"For upwards of half a century he has sedulously laboured to entertain the public, after a most pleasant and cultivated fashion, figuring prominently the while in literary and artistic society. His memories are thoroughly interesting and amusing."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

"Here, however, we must stop, and have not space to do more than commend to our readers this very interesting and valuable budget of 'Recollections and Reflections.'—*Bulwer*.

"Mr. Planché writes in a lively and pleasant style, and having plenty to tell, knows how to tell it. His book, indeed, is a valuable contribution to the materials of theatrical history."—*Spectator*.

"That the labours of this veteran author, dramatist, and antiquarian may shortly be made public, and that he may long enjoy the favour he has fairly earned, is our sincere wish, as we once more recommend his book to our readers."—*Era*.

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thor of "Lost Sir Maudslayi"
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MC CARTHY
BROKEN TO HARNESS. By EDMUND
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MAURICE DERING. By the same.
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By JUSTIN MC CARTHY.
THE PRETTY WIDOW. By CHARLES
H. ROSS
MISS FORRESTER. By the Author of
"Archie Lovell"
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